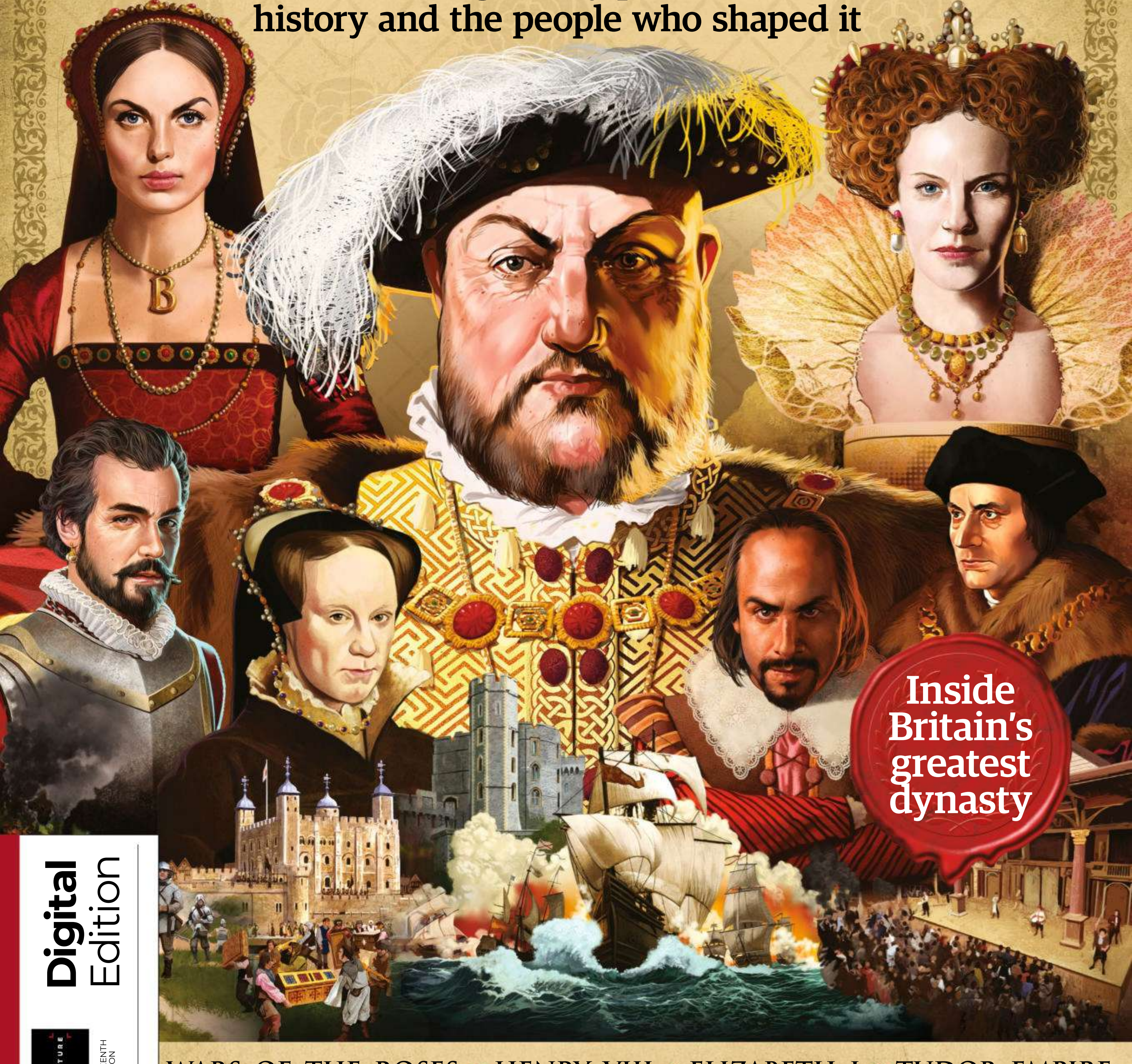
NEW

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Book of the

TUDORS

Discover the legendary period of British history and the people who shaped it

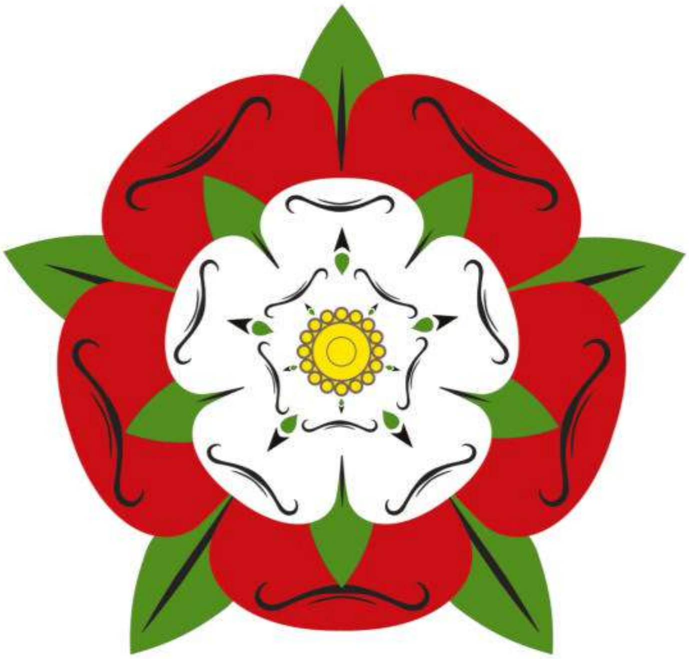


Inside Britain's greatest dynasty

Digital Edition

FIFTEENTH EDITION

WARS OF THE ROSES ◆ HENRY VIII ◆ ELIZABETH I ◆ TUDOR EMPIRE



Welcome to
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Book of the
TUDORS

On Bosworth field in 1485 the feud that had caused bloodshed and battle for three decades came to an end. The victor was the last hope of the Lancastrians, Henry Tudor, and by marrying Elizabeth of York, the daughter of the Yorkist Edward IV, he joined together two warring houses and created the Tudor rose, a symbol that has endured along with the reputation of England's most notorious dynasty. In this new edition of Book of the Tudors, you'll discover how the dynasty cemented its place in history, from the red-soaked fields of the Wars of the Roses and the string of Tudor monarchs, to what everyday life was like for the lowly population and the people that spent their time in Henry VIII's grim Tower of London. Packed with beautiful illustrations and insights into the period, this is the perfect guide for anyone who wants to learn about a legendary period of English history.

FUTURE

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Book of the TUDORS

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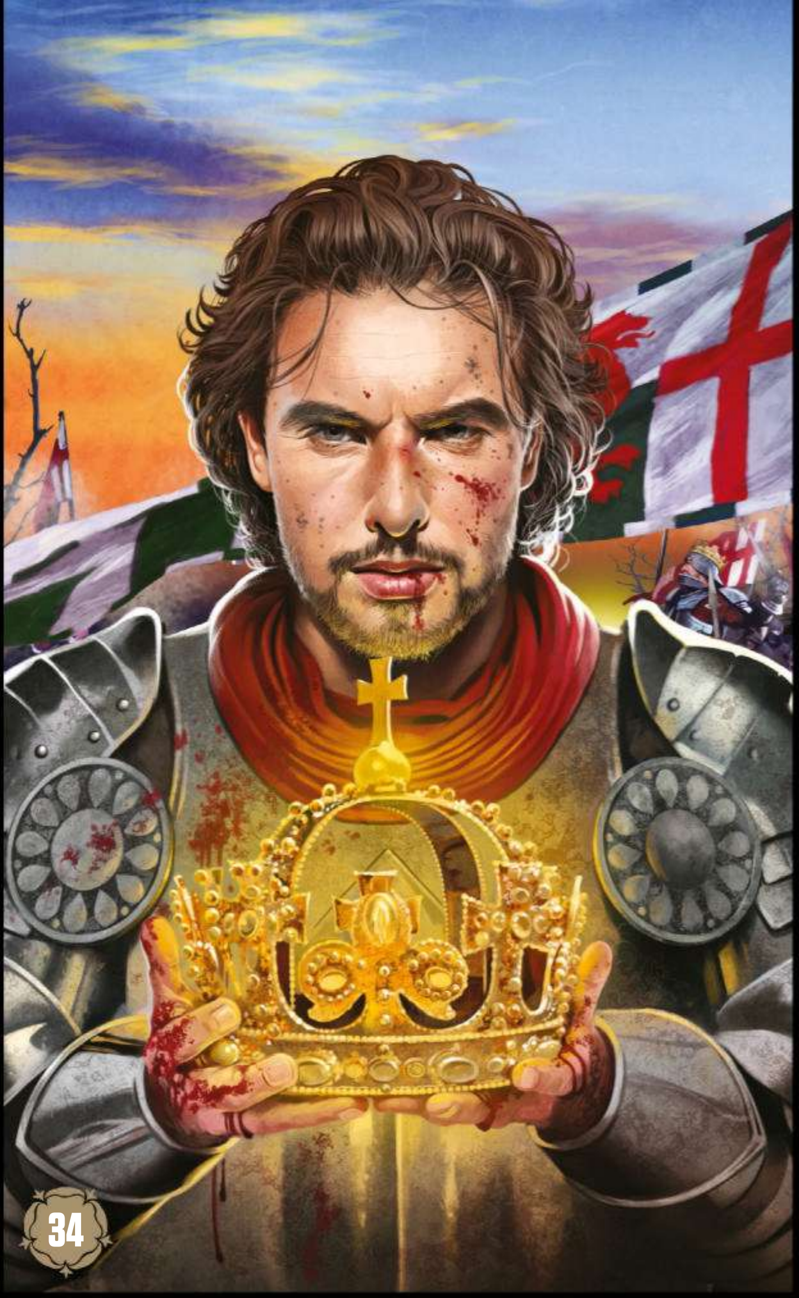
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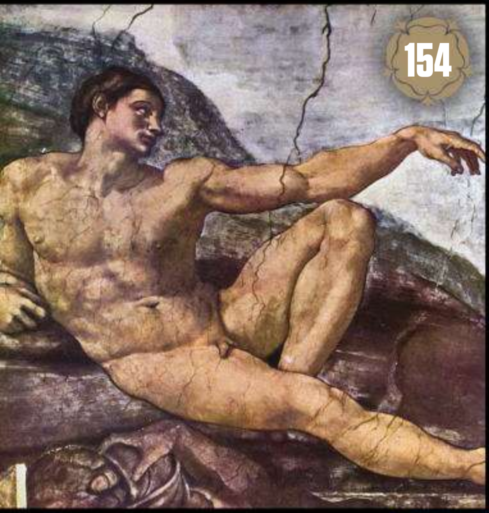

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How the artistic revolution found its way to England

© Graham Turner, Alamy

Origins of a dynasty

Trace back the lineage that sparked the Wars of the Roses

Edward III was known for military success

Philippa of Hainault
1314-1369

Edward III Plantagenet
1312-1377

Constance of Castile
1354-1394

Isabella of Castile
1355-1392

Edmund of Langley
1341-1402

+10 others

Blanche of Lancaster
1345-1368

John of Gaunt
1340-1399

Katherine Swynford
1350-1403

Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent
1328-1385

Edward, the Black Prince
1330-1376

John I, King of Portugal
1357-1433

Philippa of Lancaster
1360-1415

+4 died at young age

The Beauforts

Henry IV was known as 'Bolingbroke'

King Richard II was the subject of a Shakespearean play

Richard II Plantagenet
1367-1400

Anne of Bohemia
1366-1394

Elizabeth of Lancaster
1363-1426

John Holland Duke of Exeter
1352-1400

Mary de Bohun
1368-1394

Henry IV Plantagenet
1366-1413

Blanche of England
1392-1409

Ludwig III, Elector Palatine
1378-1436

Edward
Died at 4 days old

Philippa of England
1394-1430

Eric VII, King of Denmark
1381-1459

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester
1390-1447

Jacqueline, Countess Hainaut
1401-1436

Margaret Holland
1385-1439

Thomas, Duke of Clarence
1388-1421

Jacquetta of Luxembourg
1416-1472

John, Duke of Bedford
1389-1435

Anne of Burgundy
1404-1432

John, Duke of Bedford acted as regent of France

Edward, Duke of York
1373-1415

Edward of Norwich, 2nd Duke of York

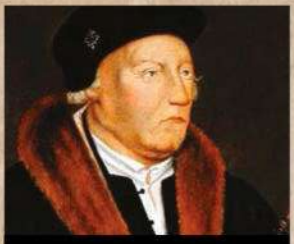
Edward, Duke of York, translated and wrote passages in a hunting treatise, *The Master of Game*, between 1406 and 1413

Henry V
1387-1422
The famous warrior king of England who scored a famous victory over the French at the Battle of Agincourt, Henry V was the second English monarch to stem from the House of Lancaster after his father, King Henry IV.

Catherine of Valois
1401-1437
Queen consort of England from 1420 to 1422, Catherine of Valois was the daughter of Charles VI of France. She was married to Henry V in 1420. In December 1421, she gave birth to the future Henry VI. Later, after Henry V's death, she went on to form a relationship with Owen Tudor.

Sir Owen Tudor
1400-1461
A Welsh soldier and courtier, Owen Tudor was descended from a Welsh prince, Rhys ap Gruffudd. After fighting at Agincourt he was awarded English rights and went on to serve in the household of Catherine of Valois after Henry V's death. They were possibly married in secret in 1429.

Origins of a dynasty

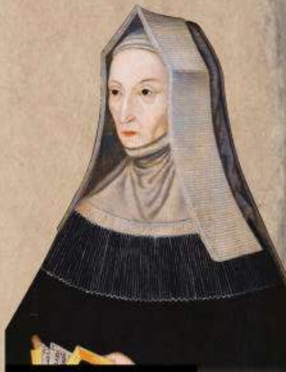

Henry Bourchier was a great-grandson of Edward IIII

Richard of Conisburgh
1375-1415
The father of Richard Plantagenet and husband to Anne de Mortimer, Richard of Conisburgh was the 3rd Earl of Cambridge and a prominent figure in the Southampton Plot against Henry V. He was caught and executed.

Anne de Mortimer
1390-1411
The mother of Richard Plantagenet and grandmother of King Edward IV and King Richard III, Anne de Mortimer was descended from royalty through her mother and grandparents. She died of childbirth.

Henry VI
1421-1471
Henry VI was the third king from the House of Lancaster. He became king at just nine months old. He suffered from periods of madness throughout his life and was deposed by Edward IV and the House of York.

Margaret of Anjou
1430-1482
The wife of Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou was the niece of Charles VII. Widely held to be responsible for the Wars of the Roses after excluding the Duke of York from the Great Council in 1455.


Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII's mother

Henry Bourchier
1404-1483

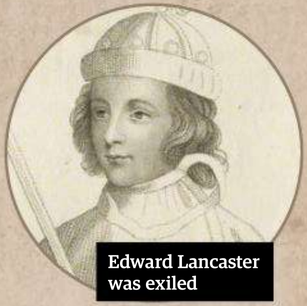
Isabel of Cambridge
1409-1484

Cecily Neville, a key Yorkist

Richard Plantagenet
1415-1495
The son of Anne de Mortimer and Richard of Conisburgh, Richard of York became a key Yorkist leader during the early parts of the Wars of the Roses, winning numerous battles and even becoming Lord Protector for a time.

Cecily Neville
1415-1495
The wife of Richard Plantagenet, Cecily Neville was the Duchess of York and was well known for her beauty and piety. She gave birth to two later kings of England, Edward IV and Richard III. She outlived her husband by 35 years.

Edward of Lancaster
1453-1471
The only child of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. After the battle of Towton he was exiled in France with his mother. He was killed in battle in Tewkesbury.


Edward Lancaster was exiled

Henry Holland
1430-1475

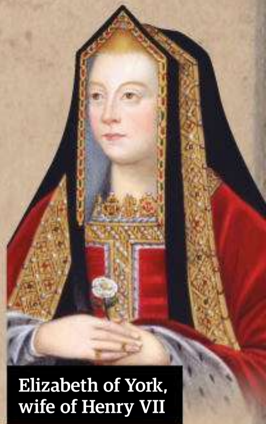
Anne of York
1439-1476

Edmund, Earl of Rutland
1443-1460

+6 died at young age

Margaret of York
1446-1503

Charles, Duke of Burgundy
1433-1477


Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII

Lady Anne Neville
1456-1485

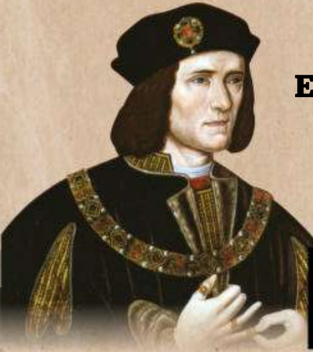
Richard III
1452-1485
King of England for just two years, Richard III was the last king from the House of York and the last of the House of Plantagenet. Richard was famously defeated by Henry Tudor at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk
1444-1503

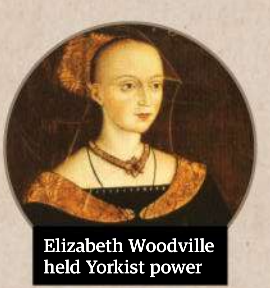
John de la Pole
1442-1492

George, Duke of Clarence
1449-1478

Isabella Neville
1451-1476


Richard III was a controversial monarch

Edward, Prince of Wales
1473-1484


Elizabeth Woodville held Yorkist power

Edward IV
1442-1483
The first Yorkist king of England, Edward IV ruled the country in two spells, from 1461 to 1470 and then after an overthrow and subsequent restoration, from 1471 to 1483. He was succeeded by his younger brother Richard III.

Elizabeth Woodville
1437-1492
Spouse of King Edward IV from 1464, Elizabeth Woodville was one of the most powerful women in England during the Wars of the Roses. She gave birth to the Princes in the Tower and Elizabeth of York, future wife of Henry Tudor, King Henry VII of England.

Margaret Beaufort
1443-1509
Margaret Beaufort was the daughter of the Duke of Somerset and the great-great granddaughter of King Edward III. She gave birth to the future Henry VII at just 13 years old.

Edmund Tudor
1431-1456
Edmund Tudor was the first son of Owen Tudor and Catherine of Valois. Henry VI made him the Earl of Richmond in 1452. He married Margaret Beaufort in 1455.

William Courtenay
1475-1511

Catherine of York
1479-1527

+4 daughters

George, Duke of Bedford
1477-1479

Anne of York
1475-1511

Thomas Howard
1473-1554

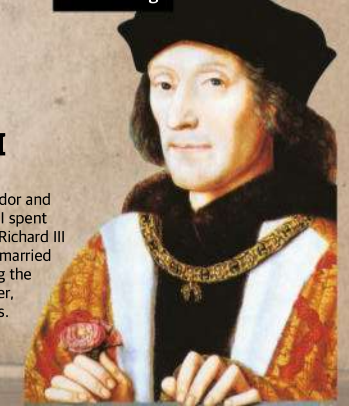
What happened to the Princes in the Tower?

Edward V
1470-1483
One of the famous Princes in the Tower, Edward V was a son of Elizabeth Woodville and uncrowned king for just 86 days. He was succeeded infamously by his uncle and Lord Protector, Richard of Gloucester, later King Richard III of England.

Richard of Shrewsbury
1473-1483
The second son of Elizabeth Woodville and King Edward IV, Richard was the second famous member of the Princes in the Tower. Richard was almost certainly murdered along with Edward and disposed of in secret.

Elizabeth of York
1466-1503
The first daughter of Elizabeth Woodville, Elizabeth of York played a key part in ending the Wars of the Roses, marrying the Lancastrian ally Henry Tudor on 18 January 1486, establishing the Tudor dynasty.

Henry VII
1457-1509
The only child of Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII spent years in exile before defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. He married Elizabeth of York, thus uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster, ending the Wars of the Roses.


Henry VII, Tudor king

Battle for the throne

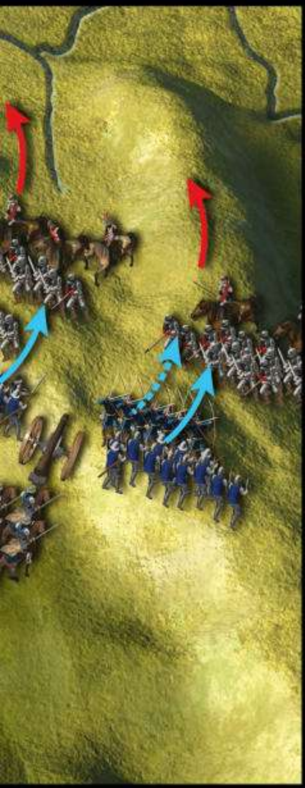
The Tudor reign began with blood, as two houses struggled for power

12 Henry VI and the Wars of the Roses
How a country was split by the conflict between rival branches of the House of Plantagenet

22 Battle of Towton
One of the bloodiest battles in English history that shaped the Wars of the Roses

30 Battle of Tewkesbury
Discover the story of a decisive and gruesome showdown between the houses of Lancaster and York

34 Dawn of the Tudors
How the Wars of the Roses was ended at Bosworth, putting Henry VII on the throne



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1455 – 1485

Henry VI and the Wars of the Roses

In war, blood is power, blood is family, blood is everything. England's Wars of the Roses split a country in two and saw the rise and fall of no fewer than four monarchs

It was 1453 and England was still at war with its old enemy France. Since the legendary days of King Henry V, the warrior king who spilled the blood of the noble enemy in spades at Agincourt and secured England's claim to the tactically important province of Normandy, both great western powers had been fighting nonstop, with England slowly but surely being pushed back toward the English Channel. English King Henry VI's military affairs were being overseen by the Duke of Somerset Edmund Beaufort, an experienced military commander who was about to suffer the ignobility of losing Bordeaux and leaving Calais as England's only remaining territory on the shores of mainland Europe.

Back in England, Henry VI - shy, pious and noncombatant - was busy being dominated by his powerful and ruthless wife, Margaret of Anjou, the niece of the French King Charles VII, as well as his feuding court nobles, with Henry cow-towing to both and leaving the affairs of England and his estate in a paralysing limbo. Amid this turmoil, a year previously the Duke of York, Richard Plantagenet, had travelled to London with an army to present the court with a list of grievances that they and the king were failing to address. This potentially explosive situation had been handled by Margaret and with the news that she was now pregnant, it helped to re-isolate York and force him to leave the capital with his tail between his legs.

When King Henry VI was told of the final loss of Bordeaux he suffered a mental breakdown. Completely unaware of who he was, what was going on around him and how to act toward people, Henry finally let the last tentative grip of control he had over England slip through his fingers. No longer was Henry the softly spoken and pious king of old, but instead a dazed half-man, stumbling around his home and court, unable to speak cogently and liable to sudden bouts of hysteria and

aggressive confusion. Henry's ethereal grasp on reality would go on to last an entire year. Margaret dealt with him as best she could, shielding him from the circling vultures at court and making all decisions regarding the rule of the nation for him. However, even she couldn't shield him from his own demons, with the king repeatedly heard screaming in the depths of night and continuously stricken with bouts of amnesia.

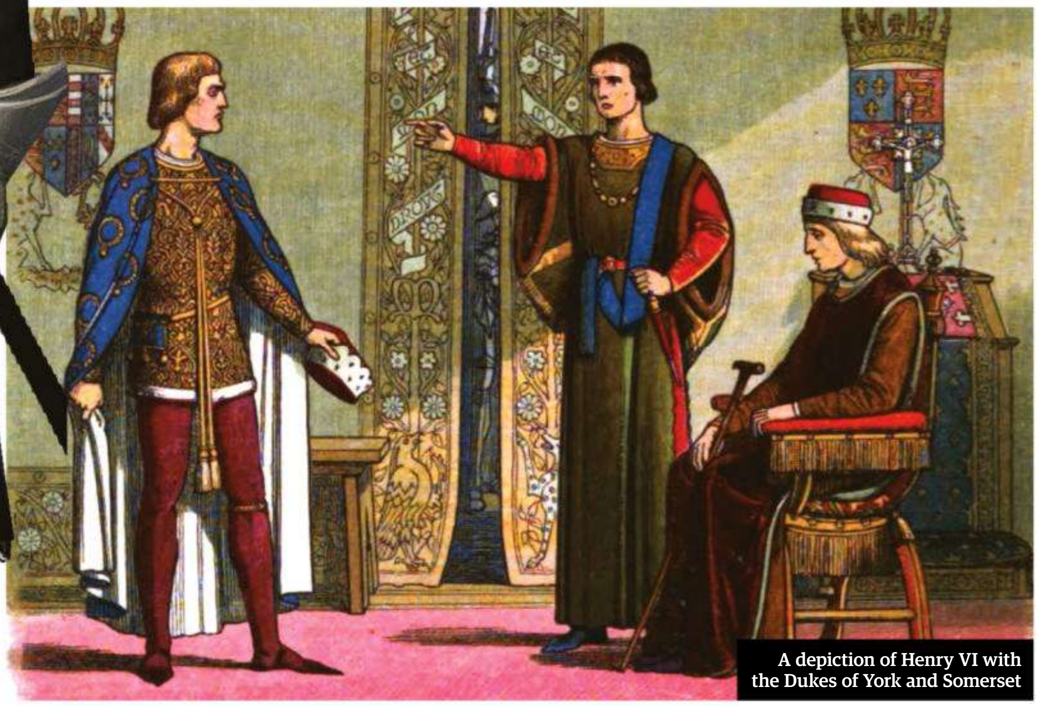
When Margaret eventually gave birth to their son Edward, Henry's mental state was so deteriorated he didn't recognise him. Due to this incapacity, even his wilful and powerful wife Margaret was unable to stop the return of the Duke of York and his supporters, a group that now included Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, one of England's major financial and political powers. A Council of Regency was set up and power taken by Richard as Lord Protector of England. Once installed, he immediately imprisoned his old enemy, the Duke of Somerset, and backed all nobles opposing Henry, shifting the balance of court in his favour. The weak king had seemingly been deposed.

While the king was still alive – even if he was sometimes little more than a gibbering wreck – Richard's position was always perilous and when, on Christmas Day 1454, Henry suddenly and inexplicably regained his senses the balance of power in this game of thrones shifted yet again. The king had gone from not being able to recognise anyone, laughing maniacally on his own to the quiet and shy ruler of old almost overnight. With Henry now recovered, his queen lost no time in challenging York for the throne and quickly re-established Henry and herself at the centre of court. Never one to shy away from a confrontation – and well aware of the danger he presented – the queen began scheming to remove Richard from his reduced but still influential position, colluding with other nobles to discredit him and undermine his power and influence.

Margaret knew how to work the political system, which relied largely on the noble households. Richard soon found himself increasingly bypassed when it came to decisions, relegated away from London and, harried by Margaret at every turn, he found his allies slipping away. Finally, in early-1455, he decided that enough was enough and anticipating impending arrest for treason, raised an army and marched toward London. By the standards of the military might that was to come, this army of roughly 7,000 men may have been small, but there was nothing small in the statement that it made: the battle lines between the two great noble houses of England and their supporters had been drawn and the country held its breath, preparing to be plunged headfirst into chaos.

Richard Plantagenet was now not just contending for control at court but as the nation's king, and his loyal nobles gathered round him as the leader and figurehead of the House of York. Opposing him directly was Margaret of Anjou and her king, with the former now effectively the leader of the House of Lancaster. While the split in support for the two opposing sides wasn't just decided by geography, with nobles from all parts of the country siding with one house or the other due to a series of complex and often long-standing allegiances, although with Richard marching down from the north where he had recruited much of his army, it seemed like the north was coming to claim what it believed was rightfully its property in the south. To many of the nobles supporting the House of York they were marching on the capital with their knights, infantrymen and archers to remove a weak king from power and restore order to a country on the verge of disintegration and collapse.

> "Completely unaware of who he was, Henry finally let the last tentative grip of control he had over England slip through his fingertips"



A depiction of Henry VI with the Dukes of York and Somerset

Battle for the throne

The key players in the bloody quest for ultimate power

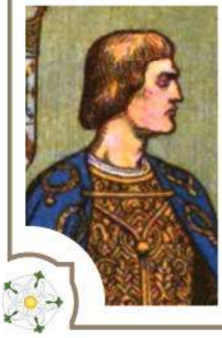
York

The first cadet branch of the parent House of Plantagenet, descended down the male line of the house from Edmund of Langley, the 1st Duke of York and the fourth surviving son of King Edward III. Three of its members down the ages became kings of the country. The house came to an end when Henry Tudor established the House of Tudor at the close of the Wars of the Roses.

Main supporters: Prince of Wales; Lord of Ireland; Dukes of York, Clarence, Gloucester.

Emblem: A white rose.

Claim to the throne: Richard Plantagenet was descended from King Edward III.



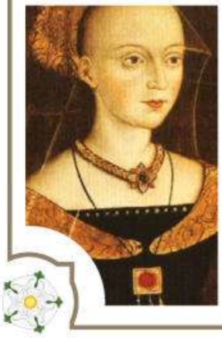
Duke of York
Richard Plantagenet

Date of birth: 21 September 1411

Strengths: Powerful and well connected; inherited large estates and influence in England and France.

Weaknesses: A series of military victories led him to overconfidence, ensuring his own death in a crushing defeat at the Battle of Wakefield.

POWER RATING: ●●●●○



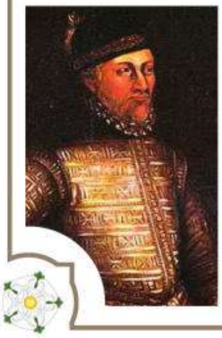
Queen Consort
Elizabeth Woodville

Date of birth: 1437

Strengths: Politically slick; married well above her station, aggravating the family's rivals, and was a renowned beauty

Weaknesses: Not powerful enough to hold the throne for her children; let her power be usurped by Lady Margaret Beaufort in later years.

POWER RATING: ●●●○○



Earl of Warwick
Richard Neville

Date of birth: 22 November 1428

Strengths: A principal politician in England, he deposed two kings to earn the nickname 'the Kingmaker'.

Weaknesses: Let his dominant position at the English court be gradually eroded in later years due to directing his focus toward France.

POWER RATING: ●●●●●

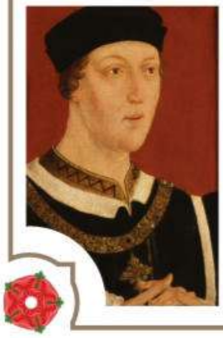
Lancaster

The second of two junior branches of the mighty royal House of Plantagenet, the House of Lancaster was created with the establishment of the Earldom of Lancaster by Henry III of England in 1267. From that date the House of Lancaster provided England with three kings, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI before becoming extinct with the execution of the latter's son, Edward Prince of Wales, by the rival House of York during the Wars.

Main supporters: Earls of Lancaster, Leicester, Moray, Ferrers, Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln; Duke of Lancaster

Emblem: A red rose.

Claim to the throne: Its figurehead was Henry VI, the only son of Henry V.



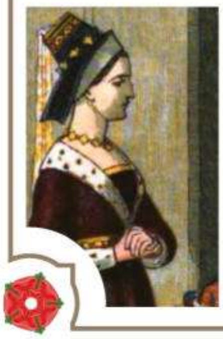
King of England
Henry VI

Date of birth: 6 December 1421

Strengths: Son of the powerful and popular Henry V; married well to the French-born Margaret of Anjou, was generally considered benevolent and pious.

Weaknesses: Bouts of crippling mental illness saw his kingdom ruled by others during his reign for extended periods of time.

POWER RATING: ●●○○○



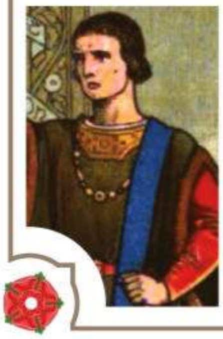
Queen Consort
Margaret of Anjou

Date of birth: 23 March 1430

Strengths: Passionate, proud and strong-willed, Margaret provided the House of Lancaster the scheming and ruthless ruler Henry VI failed to be.

Weaknesses: Overstepped her power level in the Battle of Tewkesbury, leading to her ultimate fall from grace and power.

POWER RATING: ●●●●○



Duke of Somerset
Edmund Beaufort

Date of birth: 1406

Strengths: Head of one of the most influential families in England. Experienced and respected by his peers.

Weaknesses: Poor temperament, lost more battles than he won; let a personal feud with the Duke of York get violently out of hand.

POWER RATING: ●●●○○

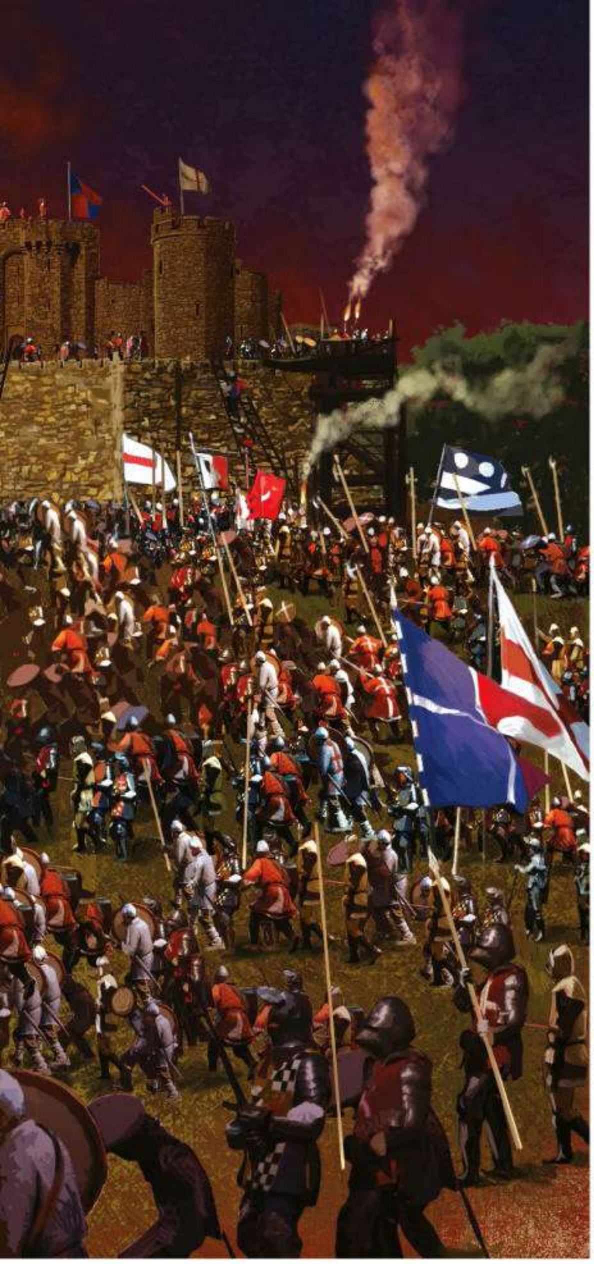
> "Richard Plantagenet was now not just a contender for control of England but also its kingship, as the leader and figurehead of the House of York"

Even the staunchest of Henry VI's supporters would have been forced to admit the country had seen better days. Following a series of French victories over the English on the continent, they had grown confident and had begun raiding English supply lines and vessels in the Channel. In addition, due to the years of warfare England was in poor financial shape, while the absence of a strong king had led to London's political scene descending into a series of arguments, squabbles and petty confrontations. A weakened country was slowly bleeding to death from infighting, so in marching on the capital Richard Plantagenet intended to wrestle back some semblance of control over it.

The king might have been largely blind to the threat of the Duke of York but, luckily for the House of Lancaster, the ever-vigilant and ruthless Margaret was not. She quickly drummed up support for a hastily assembled army to counter the threat from Richard's forces. Margaret dispatched this army under the command of her favourite and a sworn enemy of Richard, Edmund, Duke of Somerset. The king was also sent along with the army and, judging by the comparatively small size of the Lancastrian army (roughly 2,000 men), it seemed Margaret expected that there would be no hostilities, with some sort of peace treaty the likely outcome and the status quo maintained. The beautiful and resourceful queen was wrong, though. Spectacularly so.

The two armies came together at St Albans just north of London on 22 May 1455, and after a couple of minor skirmishes, the first battle of the Wars of the Roses broke out. Richard's Yorkist force quickly cut down the Duke of Somerset as well as Lancastrian loyal nobles Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland and Lord Thomas Clifford. Turning a defeat into a catastrophe, Henry VI himself was also captured, personally apprehended by Richard's key ally Warwick's forces as he hid in a local tanner's shop, abandoned by his advisers and servants and seemingly suffering from yet another debilitating mental breakdown.

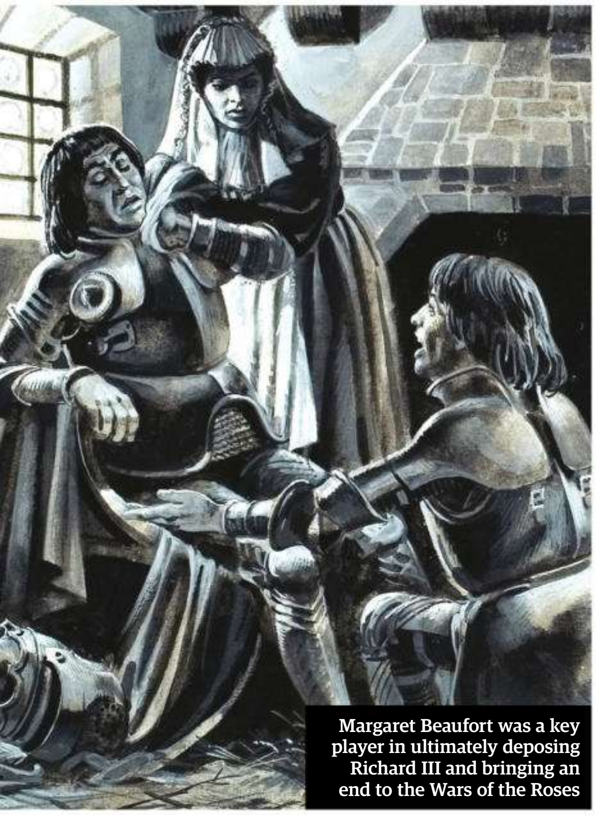
The following day, York and Warwick marched with the now-mad-again king in their custody to London. Redepositing the unfortunate Henry with Margaret, Richard retook the position of Lord Protector and he and Warwick began to re-establish themselves. An uneasy truce of sorts followed, with both sides plotting to overthrow the other but failing to act decisively. Warwick became captain of Calais – an important and powerful position – but once again Henry VI recovered his mental strength and took his royal progress (a tour) into the Midlands in 1456, establishing his court in Coventry. By this point, the country effectively had two different kings, an unsustainable state of affairs. In this court, the third Duke of Somerset, Henry Beaufort was emerging as the favourite, with plans struck by him and Margaret to roll back all the appointments York had made while Lord Protector and to degrade Warwick's influence on state affairs. The situation was balancing on a knife's edge; one sudden move, one perceived



threat, and the whole country would rapidly descend into all-out civil war.

It took three years, but that the peace would end was as inevitable as the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. The move that would shatter the precarious peace came in 1459, when York and Warwick were summoned to a royal council in Coventry by Henry VI and Margaret and, fearing foul play and a potential threat to their lives, refused to go, instead grouping together with their supporters at the strategically vital Ludlow Castle, right on the Welsh border. This was the starting pistol for the beginning of the bloodiest civil war England had ever seen. The Battle of Blore Heath was first, then the Battle of Ludford Bridge, followed by the Battle of Northampton and the Battle of Wakefield. Each new bloody confrontation saw thousands of men smash into each other, each thrust with a dagger or a sword that hit home a blow to the heart of the House of Lancaster or York. The balance of power shifted fluidly from one house to the other, but sometimes into nothingness, with no real victor or controlling stake identifiable.

These battles didn't just see commoners cut down in their thousands; for Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York, Wakefield would be his final resting place. Decades of warfare had finally caught up with him. With Richard slain in battle and his second son Edmund and ally Richard of Salisbury captured and executed, Wakefield was one of the largest Lancastrian victories of the Wars of the Roses and a boon for the ageing but powerful Margaret of Anjou. Following Wakefield, the House of Lancaster pressed on, with their army returning south, outmanoeuvring Warwick's Yorkist army



Margaret Beaufort was a key player in ultimately deposing Richard III and bringing an end to the Wars of the Roses

The many Wars of the Roses

30 years of conflict mapped out on a bloody land

St Albans 22 May 1455
St Albans saw Richard of York lead a force of over 3,000 soldiers on a direct course for London to take down Henry VI. Henry rode out to meet the Yorkist army and took up a defensive position at St Albans. Richard attacked the city with a great fury and defeated Henry. Queen Margaret and her young son Edward were forced into exile.

Blore Heath 23 September 1459
Despite scoring a victory at St Albans, Richard's advance to London was halted. The Wars rekindled themselves four years later when Richard, fearing his campaign was losing momentum, decided to centralise his forces around the town of Ludlow and launch a massive assault on the Lancastrians. Queen Margaret heard of the movement and dispatched her loyal Lord Audley to intercept. Despite Audley having roughly twice as many soldiers, he lost the battle and his life.

Wakefield 30 December 1460
With a large countering army assembled by the Lancastrians near the city of York, Richard took his forces north along with Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury to intercept. Richard took a defensive position at Sandal Castle due to Lancastrians sporting a force close to 20,000, while his own forces numbered only around 10,000. Despite taking Sandal however, Richard decided to ride out and meet the Lancastrian forces directly. He was eventually overwhelmed and killed in battle. Richard Neville and Richard's son are executed.

Towton 29 March 1461
A vast Yorkist force numbering 30,000 men fought the elements and a 35,000-strong force of Lancastrians at Towton. After hours of bloody fighting the Duke of Norfolk arrived with reinforcements at the last moment and the Yorkists won the day.

Edgecote Moor 26 July 1469
Eight years on from the bloody battle of Towton, in which Edward IV had ruled unopposed, an army sent to put down an uprising was attacked by Lancastrian forces and quickly defeated, with the Earls of Pembroke and Devon killed.

Tewkesbury 4 May 1471
The Lancastrian forces of the 4th Duke of Somerset, Edmund Beaufort, plotted a course for Wales. King Edward IV heard of the move and sent an army to intercept. The two sides met at Tewkesbury and, after Somerset attempted a failed break of the Yorkist lines and was countered, the Lancastrian force was routed, the Prince of Wales killed in battle, Somerset executed and Queen Margaret of Anjou captured.

Bosworth 22 August 1485
Richard III had succeeded Edward IV as king. Henry Tudor had other ideas and landed in Wales on 7 August 1485 to take the crown. Richard heard of the invasion and moved to intercept Henry, the two forces eventually meeting south of Bosworth. During the ensuing battle Lord Thomas Stanley and Sir William Stanley switched sides from the Yorkists to the Lancastrians. As a result, Richard III was killed and Henry became King Henry VII.

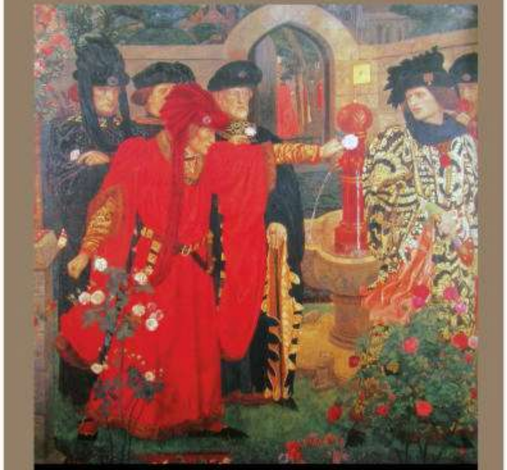
Stoke 16 June 1487
The last battle of the War of the Roses, Stoke was a final, wild roll of the dice for the remaining Yorkist forces. Bolstered by German and Irish mercenaries, Yorkist troops started to march toward London, but were met at East Stoke and obliterated. Its leaders were captured and imprisoned, its men killed and the last remnants of the Yorkist faction destroyed.

The Wars of the Roses pitted Yorkists against Lancastrians for over three decades

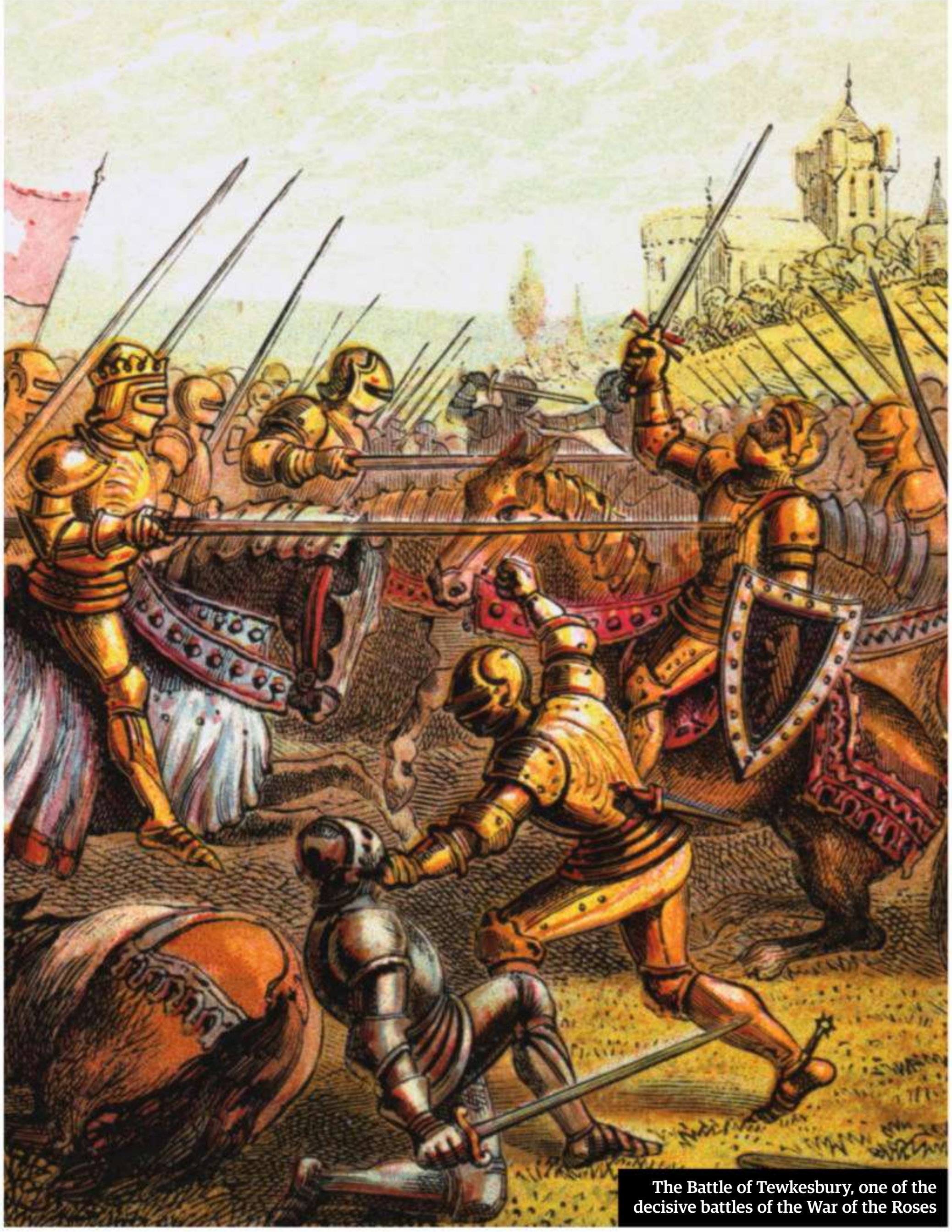
Wars of the Roses in Shakespeare and beyond

How has literature and film portrayed the events?

One of our main sources for information in popular culture on the Wars of the Roses is William Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy, which charts the political machinations, fights and jealousies that tore the English political system apart in the mid-15th century. Indeed, the current name for the series of battles – Wars of the Roses – actually stems from Act 2, Scene 4 of the work, where the bickering lords are asked to show their allegiance to either Richard Duke of York or the rival Duke of Somerset by selecting either a red or white rose from a garden. This scene, despite its dubious historical accuracy – historians think it never took place – was later seized on by Sir Walter Scott and popularised through his work *Anne of Geierstein*. The name, 'Wars of the Roses', therefore stuck and has proceeded to be used to describe the conflict since. Up until this point, the conflict had instead simply been referred to as the 'civil war'.



The historically apocryphal scene from Shakespeare's *Henry VI* where supporters of the Yorkists and Lancastrians pick either a red or white rose to show their allegiance



The Battle of Tewkesbury, one of the decisive battles of the War of the Roses

and defeating them at the Second Battle of St Albans. By now, all seemed to be lost for the ambitious House of York.

With Richard Plantagenet dead and the Earl of Warwick having suffered a bad defeat, the House of York desperately needed a figurehead to rally around and so Richard's first son, Edward of March, stepped into the breach. He had already defeated Jasper Tudor's Lancastrian army at the Battle of Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire and, hearing of Warwick's defeat, joined his father's ally. The two of them and their armies then made a beeline for the capital. Margaret and Henry VI were not in London, as they were travelling northward, so the Yorkists entered the city unopposed and to a rapturous welcome. The welcome was so enthusiastic because Henry VI's incompetence as king had seen popular opinion sway in Edward's favour and the common people had seemingly had enough of being under Lancastrian ruler.

Such was the anti-Lancastrian mood that not only did Edward receive huge support from all the Yorkist nobles around the city but he was unofficially crowned king in an impromptu ceremony held at Westminster Abbey. Edward knew though that while he had enjoyed the ceremony, he would never truly be king until Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou had been disposed of. Vowing to Parliament that he would not have a formal coronation until all pretenders to the throne had been crushed, he joined forces once more with his father's old ally, the 'Kingmaker', Warwick. Together they rode forth toward the north, leading a deadly army of over 30,000 men; their mission to take a proverbial hammer to the House of Lancaster and cut the head off its talisman. This already large army grew even more along the way, with more

> "Importantly though, while Margaret and the House of Lancaster were down for the count, they were not down and out"

men and nobles drawn to Edward's cause as he marched toward Henry VI and Margaret, as he headed straight toward what was to be one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles in the entirety of the Wars of the Roses.

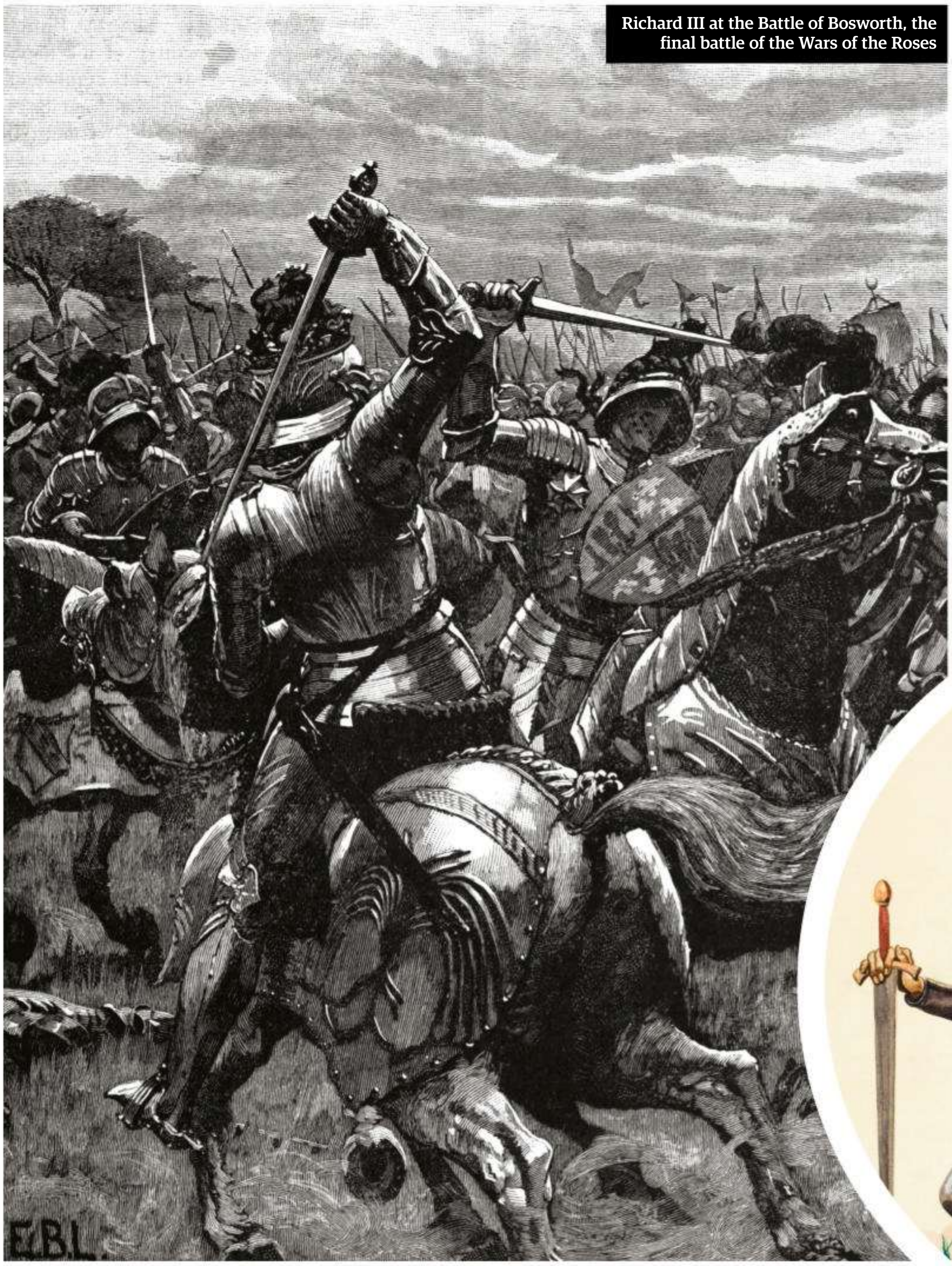
Edward and his army was finally met by the House of Lancaster's great military commander Henry Beaufort, third Duke of Somerset, south of York at the village of Towton. Margaret had dispatched Somerset to put down the son of her old nemesis Richard Plantagenet once and for all. Beaufort turned up to the killing fields of Towton with an army of 35,000 soldiers just as the first snow began to fall and settle on the ground.

When the screams and the drums of war had died away, but the blood still startlingly vivid against the white snow, England had a new king. The House of York had emerged triumphant and Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou had been forced to flee to Scotland. Edward was officially crowned the new King of England in June the same year and slowly, one by one, the remaining pockets of Lancastrian soldiers were hunted down, either killed or forced to leave England. Margaret orchestrated an attack on Carlisle later that year but due to lack of financial power and men at arms, her advance was repulsed by Edward's Yorkist forces. Her loyal Duke of Somerset was later defeated and executed at the Battle of Hexham and her husband, Henry VI was captured and imprisoned yet again. This time he was held at the notorious Tower of London.

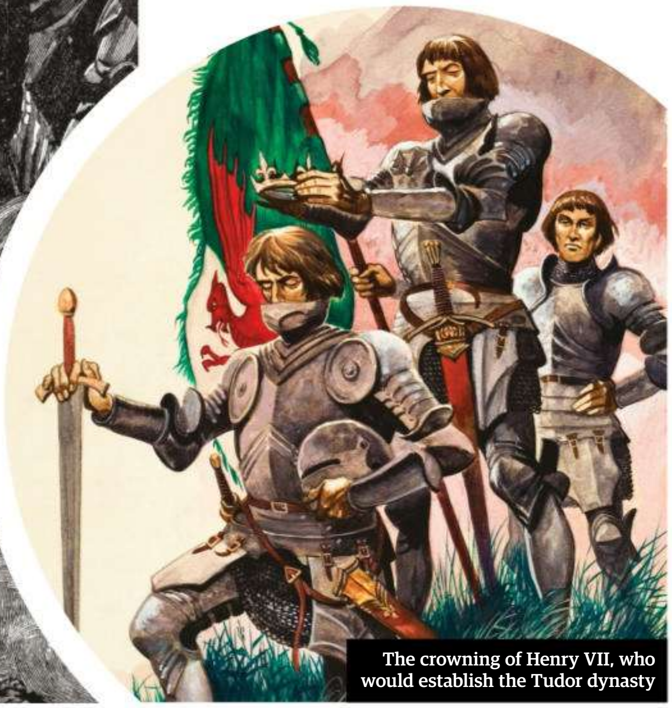
Bankrupt and no longer in command of any military support, Margaret had only one option left open to her – to return to France with her son. Setting sail from Scotland in mid-1465, Margaret of Anjou, once queen of England and leader of the House of Lancaster, was down for the count. Her position in England lay in ruin and her dream to see her son Edward of Lancaster crowned king was crushed. Importantly though, while Margaret and the House of Lancaster were down for the count, they were not down and out.

The following years of exile did nothing to dampen Margaret's ambitions as she would continue her plotting and scheming to take back the English throne like never before. In an audacious political move, she struck a deal with her former enemy, 'the Kingmaker' Earl of Warwick in an attempt to re-establish her previous control of England. While her husband Henry VI would lose his life in the Tower of London and Yorkist Edward IV would go on to be king along with his younger brother Richard III, by the time the fighting ceased in the climactic Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 and the curtain on the Wars of the Roses was finally brought down, it was the Henry Tudor who would win this game of thrones and take the crown as King of England.

The story of Henry Tudor's rise to the kingship of England, 20 years after Margaret's exile, and his subsequent founding of the historic Tudor dynasty is a story for another day. Tudor's meteoric elevation dominated the last years of the Wars of the Roses and his ultimate victory was far from a certainty, with history painting a tale more at home with the concepts of luck and chance rather than those of divine right and martial might. For that was, in the end, the real truism of England's Wars of the Roses – that all is fair in love and war and that blood is everything.



Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth, the final battle of the Wars of the Roses



The crowning of Henry VII, who would establish the Tudor dynasty

The ultimate guide to

England's Game of Thrones

Follow our comprehensive timeline of the key events that decided the outcome in the Wars of the Roses

Henry VI is born

The son of warrior king Henry V and Catherine de Valois, Henry VI was crowned king of both England and France during infancy. He would proceed to oversee England's final losses in the Hundred Years' War and famously married the strong and powerful Margaret of Anjou.
6 December 1421

The Kingmaker

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick was one of the most powerful figures in the entire war, personally overseeing the deposition of two kings is born. He was killed at the Battle of Barnet.
22 November 1428

Margaret of Anjou is born

One of the key players in the War of the Roses, Margaret of Anjou, the future wife of King Henry VI, is born to René d'Anjou, Duke of Anjou and Isabel de Lorraine.
23 March 1430

Jasper Tudor is born

Son of legendary Welsh warrior Owen Tudor, who fought alongside Henry V at Agincourt, he would become a commander and play an important role in establishing Henry Tudor as king.
1431

Elizabeth of York is born

Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV's only daughter to be born, Elizabeth of York would proceed to be queen consort of England under Henry VII. She is the Yorkist partner in the eventual joining of houses at the end of the War of the Roses.
11 February 1466

The Battle of Edgecote Moor

After raising an army to put down an uprising in Yorkshire, King Edward IV's forces are intercepted by a Lancastrian one and defeated by Robin of Redesdale.
26 July 1469

Battle of Losecoat Field

Edward IV raises a new army and attacks Lancastrian troops at Empingham, winning well.
12 March 1470

Henry VI is restored to the throne

After been alienated and shunned by his old ally Edward IV, the Earl of Warwick strikes a deal with Margaret of Anjou to defeat the Yorkist king. 'The Kingmaker' restores Henry VI to the throne.
30 October 1470

The Kingmaker exits

The final curtain for 'the Kingmaker', Barnet sees Warwick die at the hands of Yorkist forces of Edward IV.
14 April 1471

Battle of Tewkesbury

Notable for the death of Margaret of Anjou's only son Edward and her own capture.
4 May 1471

Henry VI dies

After a period of incarceration in the Tower of London, it is reported that Henry VI has died. Edward IV is suspected to have ordered his death mere hours before he himself was re-crowned as king.
21 May 1471

Margaret of Anjou is finally defeated 1475

After spending most of her life caring for her son Edward in an attempt to ensure his succession to the throne of England, his death at the Battle of Tewkesbury is the final blow to the once-powerful queen. With her spirit broken she is exiled back to France, where she spends the remainder of her life living as a poor relation of the French king.

The end of Somerset

The final battle of the experienced Lancastrian commander, the Duke of Somerset, Hexham results in a large Yorkist victory and Somerset's capture and execution.
15 May 1464

Edward IV dies at 40

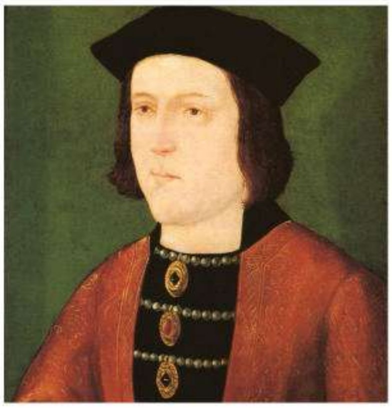
After over a decade of successful rule as the king of England in two spells, Edward IV dies suddenly and unexpectedly, throwing the country back into political turmoil. His heir, Edward V, is only 12 years old at the time of his father's death.
9 April 1483

The Princes in the Tower die 1483

The only two sons alive at the time of their father's death Edward IV, Edward V of England and Richard of Shrewsbury are famously incarcerated in the Tower of London during their youth and then mysteriously disappear, likely killed to remove any possibility of them taking the throne at a future point. Who ordered the deaths is not known.

Henry VI and the Wars of the Roses

Future Yorkist king of England



Edward is the first son of Richard Plantagenet and Cicely Neville. Following his father's death at the Battle of Wakefield, Edward would famously go on to join forces with his father's old ally, the Earl of Warwick ('the Kingmaker') and take the crown for himself in bloody warfare. He marries the politically savvy Elizabeth Woodville.

28 April 1442

Margaret Beaufort is born

The future mother of King Henry VII is born at Bletsoe Castle, Bedfordshire, England. She would become the influential matriarch that sees the rise and establishment of the Tudor Dynasty.

31 May 1443

Richard marches on London

Disaffected with a list of grievances, Richard of York marches to London from Ireland, demanding Edmund Beaufort, the Duke of Somerset, to be removed from office due to perceived failures. He is not supported at court, however, and returns a year later empty-handed.

1452

York is Lord Protector

After Henry VI's first mental breakdown, Richard of York returns to London and is named Lord Protector. York imprisons the Duke of Somerset in the Tower of London and forges his legendary warring relationship with Margaret of Anjou.

27 March 1453

The French defeat the English at Castillon

Following the disastrous Battle of Castillon, where French forces bring down the Hundred Years' War with a decisive victory over the English, Henry VI is told of the news and has his first mental breakdown.

17 July 1453

Margaret takes back power

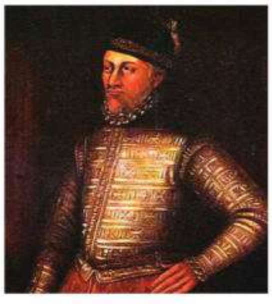
Following Henry VI's miraculous Christmas Day recovery from his madness, his wife Margaret of Anjou wastes no time in reinstating the king as the court's top power and pushes Richard out of the capital.

February 1455

First Battle of St Albans

The opening battle of the Wars of the Roses. St Albans is a small and scrappy battle but still leads to the death of three Lancastrian nobles.

22 May 1455



Warwick becomes captain of Calais

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, becomes the captain of Calais, a powerful financial and military position that leads him into his apex of power, heavily controlling the affairs not just of England but of parts of France too.

1455

Hostilities resume

After years of strained peace, hostilities break out again, with Richard Neville scoring a victory against a numerically superior foe.

23 September 1459

The Battle of Ludford Bridge

Following a victory at Blore Heath Yorkist supporters regroup at Ludford. However, a large army led by Henry VI arrives and many of the Yorkists flee.

12 October 1459

House of York gain the upper hand

An interesting battle due to the Lancastrian Lord Edmund Grey switching side to the Yorkists mid-battle. The Yorkists won easily and gained the upper hand in the Wars.

10 July 1460

Act of Accord signed

As a compromise, it is agreed that Richard of York is the rightful successor to the throne after Henry VI. This deal excludes Henry's son, Edward of Lancaster, from the throne, angering Margaret of Anjou.

October 1460

Battle of Wakefield

The last battle for Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. Riding out from a defensive position at Sandal Castle, Richard is killed by Lancastrian forces.

30 December 1460

Lancastrian army routed

Following his father's defeat at Wakefield, Richard's son Edward routs a Lancastrian army under the leadership of Jasper Tudor.

2 February 1461

Second Battle of St. Albans

The follow-up battle to the one that kickstarted the Wars of the Roses, this time there are more men, more deaths and, importantly, a Lancastrian victory.

17 February 1461

Battle of Ferrybridge

A small, precursory skirmish before the decisive and bloody Battle of Towton, Ferrybridge sees the Yorkist leader Lord Fitzwalter killed in action.

28 March 1461

The bloodiest battle

The most brutal battle of the Wars of the Roses, this clash sees almost 30,000 men die in driving snow near the village of Towton, Yorkshire.

29 March 1461

Edward's popular coronation

After clearing a path to the throne with a hard-fought victory at the Battle of Towton, Edward of York is crowned king in an official coronation in London. The coronation is well received by the public.

28 June 1461

Battle of Hedgeley Moor

The brother of 'the Kingmaker' Warwick, John Neville, clashes with a Lancastrian force on his way to the border of Scotland to arrange a peace treaty.

25 April 1464

Elizabeth Woodville marries King Edward IV

Coming from a low-ranking family, Woodville is called 'the most beautiful woman in the Island of Britain' and she uses this trait to marry advantageously, walking down the isle with King Edward IV.

1 May 1464

Richard becomes king

Despite simply being named as Lord Protector by Edward IV, Richard III is crowned king after the infamous affair of the princes in the Tower.

6 July 1483

Buckingham revolts

Richard's ascension is immensely contentious and uprisings take place. One of the largest is a rebellion orchestrated by Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who is especially disaffected. His rebellion fails, however.

18 October 1483

Anne Neville dies

The wife of embattled king Richard III dies of what is now believed to be tuberculosis, at Westminster, London. There is an eclipse on the same day, which people see as an omen depicting the impending fall of Richard.

16 March 1485

Battle of Bosworth 22 August 1485

The decisive and climactic battle of the Wars of the Roses. The Battle of Bosworth sees the Yorkist king Richard III killed in combat, his 10,000-strong force routed and his enemy, the young and charismatic Henry Tudor, carve a direct path to the throne of England. He would be crowned King Henry VII months later.

The king's mother arrives at courts

Following her son Henry's victory at the Battle of Bosworth Field, Henry's mother Margaret Beaufort arrives at court and creates a new title for herself; 'My Lady the King's Mother', ensuring herself legal and social independence..

1485

Henry unites the Houses

18 January 1486

In his marriage to Elizabeth of York, the only daughter of Elizabeth Woodville, Henry VII finally unites the remnants of the two warring Houses of York and Lancaster. The product of this marriage marks the beginning of the House of Tudor and the Tudor Dynasty, which would go on to rule England until 24 March 1603.

The Wars of the Roses end 16 June 1487

Finally, after more than 30 years of turmoil, chaos, warfare, infighting, backstabbing, side-changing, murdering, scheming and plotting, the Wars of the Roses end with Henry Tudor quashing the last remaining threat to his throne at the Battle of Stoke. Henry proceeds to rule successfully for over 20 years, despite a couple of minor threats to his throne.

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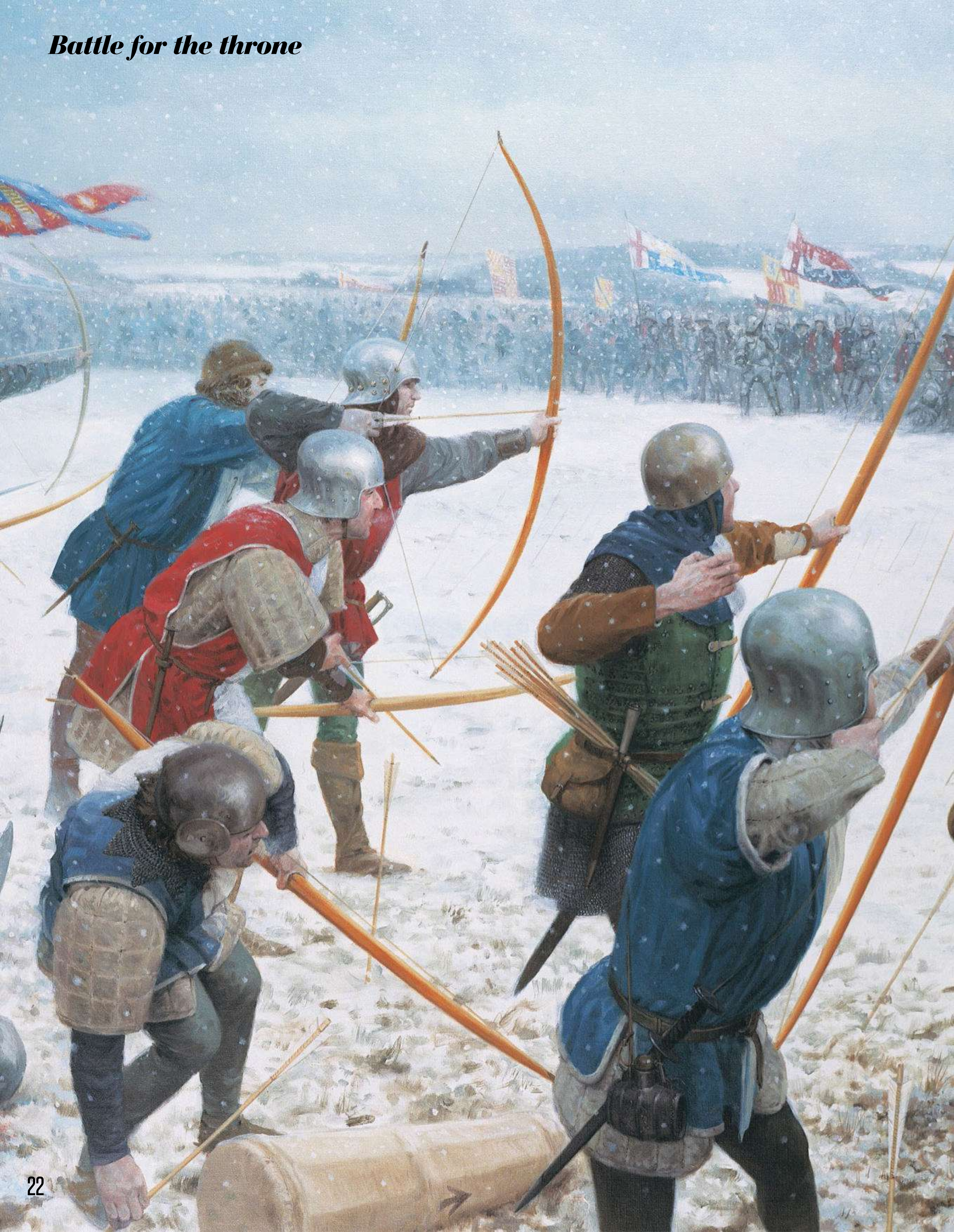

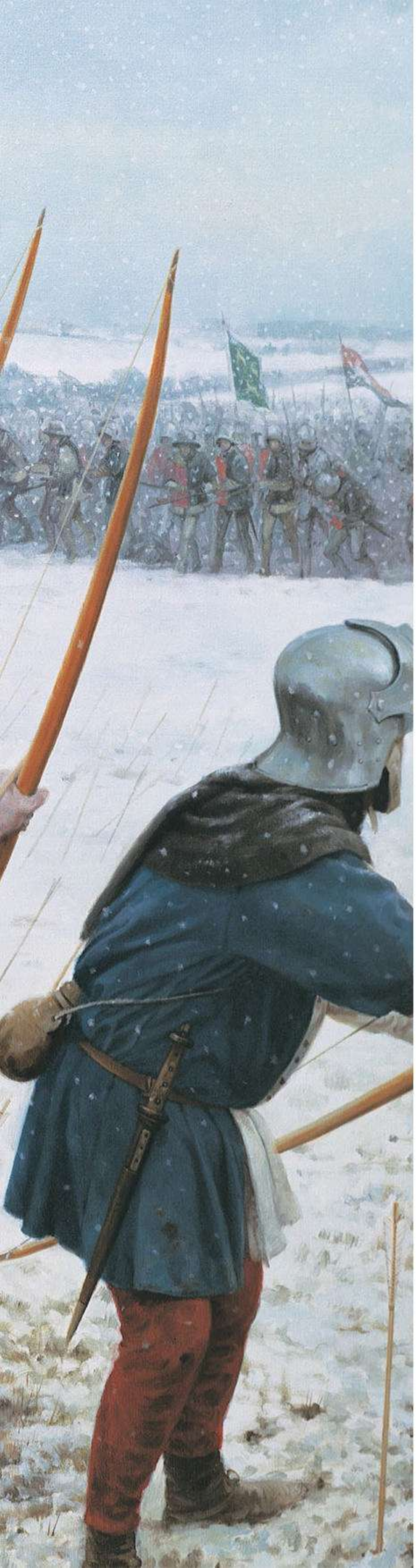

29 March 1461

Battle of Towton

How one of the bloodiest battles in English history was fought amidst the gruesome conflict we know as the Wars of the Roses

It's 29 March, Palm Sunday, 1461, and the two largest armies ever assembled on English soil meet upon a field that lies a little over ten miles from the city of York. The Wars of the Roses, a deceptively fair-sounding name for a foul conflict, are still raging on and the two armies gather in bristling steel ranks to fight for the competing royal houses and their war-embroiled kings. The red rose of Lancaster is pitted against the white rose of York, King Henry VI versus King Edward IV. The battle-hardened chivalry of England is on the field – men born to live the warrior's life, their prowess forged in the crucible of the Hundred Years War. By the day's end they will stain the freshly fallen snow with blood.

Arrayed along the battlefield's northern rim is the Lancastrian force numbering around 25,000, which is sworn to the cause of Henry VI. As the son and heir of the great warrior-king Henry V, he has been the ruler on these shores through four war-torn decades.

Approaching from the south is a Yorkist troop totalling in the region of 20,000, which is pledged to Henry's rival, the newly acclaimed Edward IV. 'The Rose of Rouen', as he's known, is a warlike young man, here to press his claim as the rightful heir to the Plantagenet dynasty, and as such, the lawful king of England.

By nightfall, these two armies will have struggled for somewhere close to ten long hours – most medieval mêlées ended within an hour or two. Very soon, whole sections of the nearby waterway, Cock Beck, will be choked with corpses as one throng finally dissolves under the onslaught of the other and is put to the sword during a furious rout. The age of chivalrous behaviour at war is long dead; the battle ends in a pitiless massacre. Indeed, Towton still stands as the bloodiest encounter ever witnessed in this land. The patch of ground north-east of Castle Hill Wood will later become such a grim killing field that it will be renamed the Bloody Meadow.

The morning of battle

The day is ill set from the start. Dawn breaks beneath a slate-grey sky making even the veterans among them anxious as men on both sides rise from their billets. Palm Sunday marks the start of Holy Week and more than a few nervous men express their concerns about fighting on such an auspicious day – souls as well as lives are at stake. The pious King Henry VI for one, while still sheltering behind the fortified walls of York, is highly agitated by the day's impending tumult.

Despite the unease, campfires are kindled before men breakfast on hard bread and soft cheese. It's

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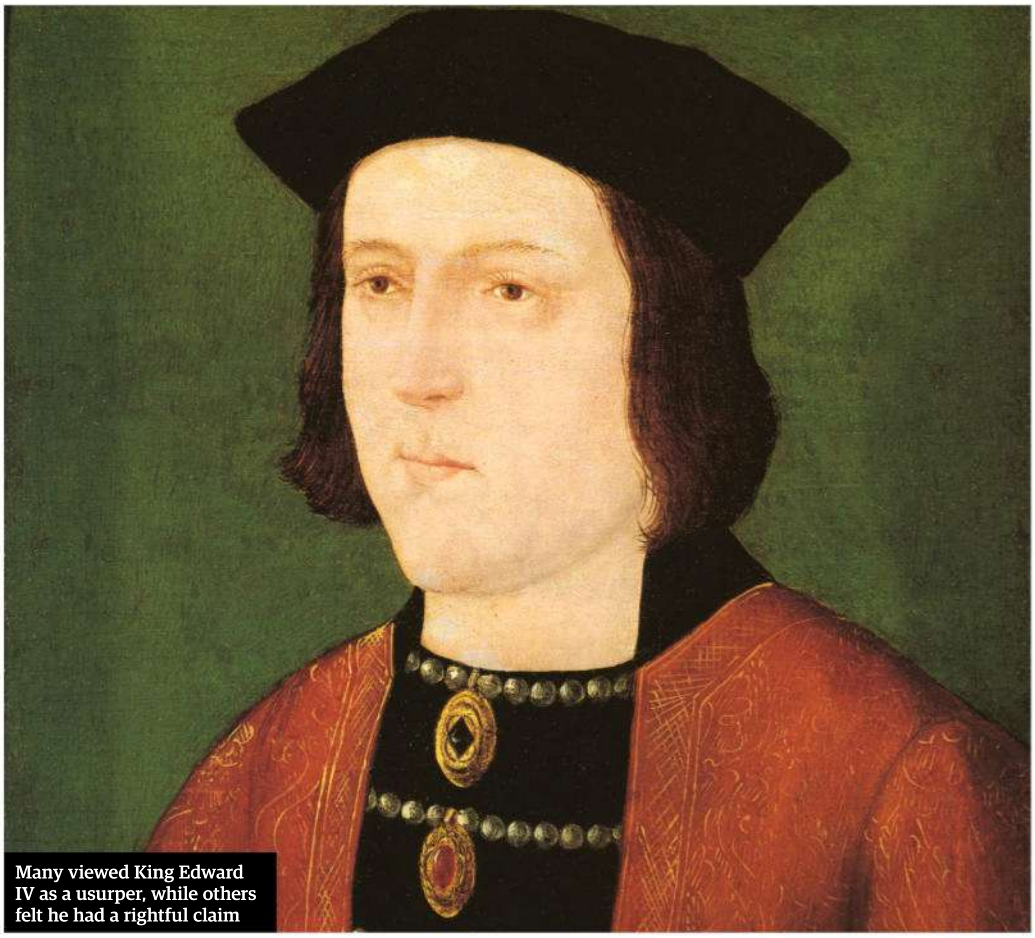
the middle of Lent and many have forsaken meat, though some enjoy dried or pickled fish, and those with ale about their person count themselves fortunate indeed. The air is bitterly cold and a hard northerly wind blows mercilessly – a storm is most definitely coming.

Under wind-snapped pennants, the Lancastrian force now takes its battle station along a northerly ridge overlooking a tract still known as North Acres, which nestles between the villages of Saxton to the south and Towton to the north. The Lancastrians' youthful commander-in-chief, the Duke of Somerset, arrays his men in a sound defensive position on the higher ground where his archers can rain down a storm of arrows on the enemy below, forcing them into an offensive position. The attackers must then trudge 100 metres uphill towards them wearing their full armour. Making matters worse, the plate-mail favoured by 15th-century English lords, as well as by many of their knights and men-at-arms, could weigh upwards of 110lbs. Such is the efficacy of the English longbow against armoured cavalry that most pitched battles are fought on foot.

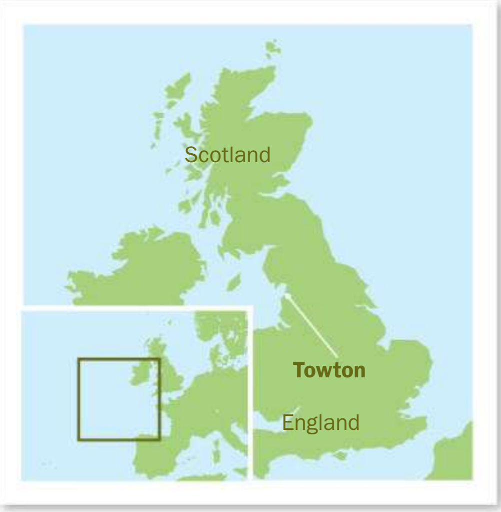
Despite the inclement weather, the Lancastrian soldiers are in good cheer, buoyed by their advantageous position. Fighting close to their base in York, many are rested and comparatively well fed, while some are still flushed with their recent success against the Yorkists at the second Battle of St Albans, fought a little over six weeks before. The Lancastrian host is also the larger and the Yorkists are still awaiting the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk's troops who are travelling northwards. The red rose force also boasts more of the land's nobility, ensuring that it has the most experienced and best-armed fighters in its ranks.

The Yorkists, meanwhile, count only one earl among their number, though it is the redoubtable Warwick. Despite this, their war-leaders, are not without military acumen and only yesterday Lord Fauconberg, 'a grizzled little man with the heart of a lion' according to one historian, won a bruising encounter at Ferrybridge where Edward IV's excellent generalship saw him constantly reinforce his vanguard and eventually win the day.

However, Edward's army is fatigued. It suffered the exertions at Ferrybridge at the end of a long and hasty march north from London – a distance of more than 200 miles. For all his weaknesses as a king, the Lancastrian figurehead, Henry VI, has reigned for almost 40 years; Edward, on the other hand, was acclaimed king in London only three weeks previously. This only adds to the unease among some in the Yorkist horde. Still, the majority of the Yorkists remain firm-hearted. After all, their new king is no usurper. Far from it, Edward is the rightful heir to the Plantagenet crown. It was Henry VI's grandfather, Henry IV, who had set the Wars of the Roses in motion with his usurpation of the English throne from the Plantagenet Richard II back in 1399.


Many viewed King Edward IV as a usurper, while others felt he had a rightful claim

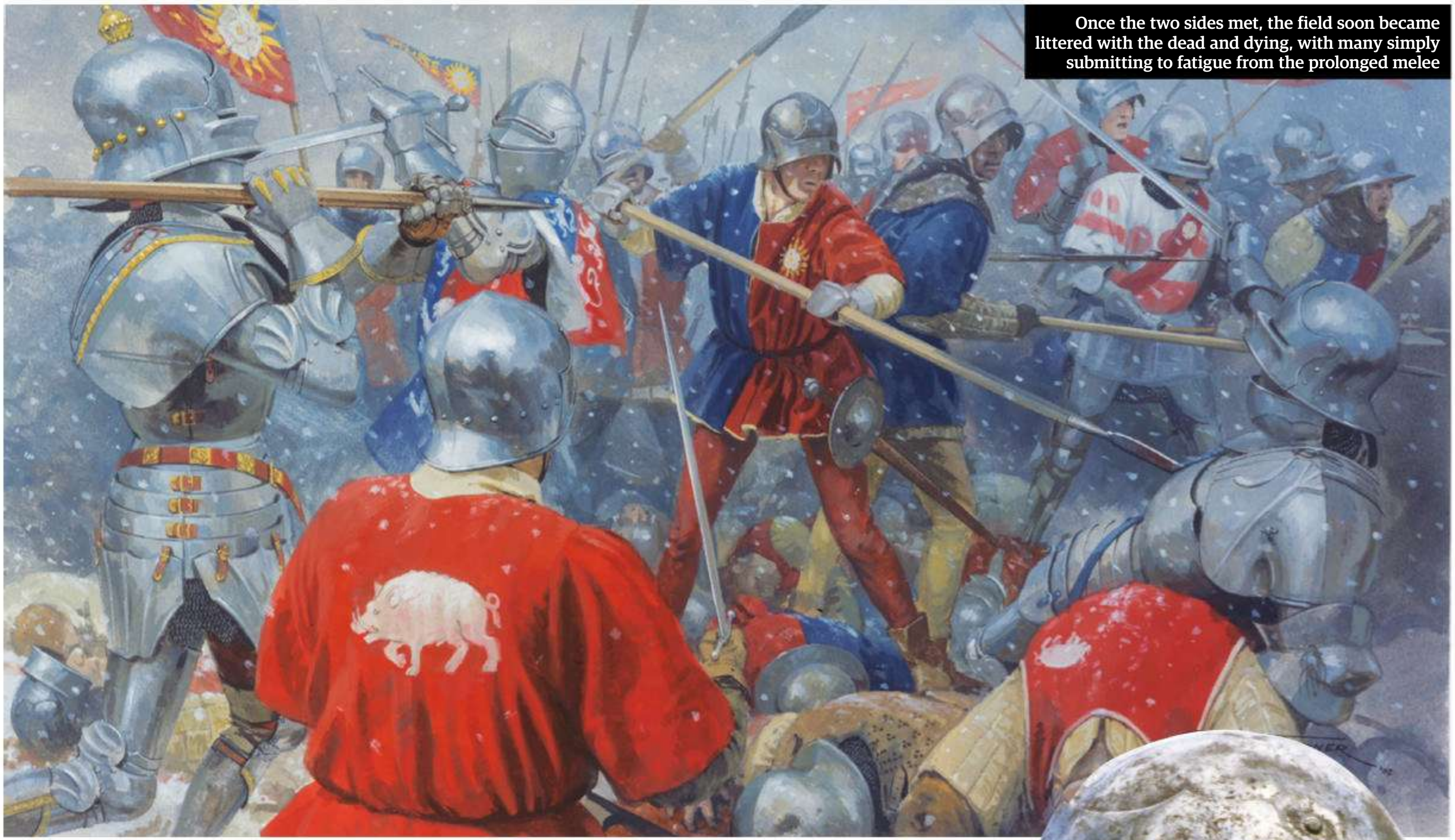
Furthermore, a great many among the Yorkists are stirred by heartfelt passions, believing that they fight for their homes and their families – to the men of southern England, the Lancastrian force is an invading foe. Henry VI's army, put into the field by his war-mongering queen, Margaret of Anjou, is populated by northerners, with a great many Scots among them, sent to war by their queen Mary Gueldres. The Lancastrian march south to the second Battle of St Albans, and its subsequent journey back north, included cavalcades of rape, robbery and pillage. The Lancastrian leaders gave their troops free rein to plunder at will any towns and villages south of the River Trent. This incensed the common folk of the southern counties.



The York-supporting Earl of Warwick, known to posterity as 'the Kingmaker', was ever the great propagandist and seized upon the Lancastrians' violent misdemeanours, decrying them, not unreasonably, as a blight upon England's fair land. His rabble-rousing whipped the already nervous citizenry of London into a maelstrom of hate and they bar the Lancastrians from their city in the aftermath of St Albans, even though the city's mayor favoured the red rose over the white.

> "The majority of the Yorkists remain firm-hearted. After all, their new king is no usurper. Far from it, Edward is the rightful heir to the crown"

Thousands of southern volunteers quickly swelled the ranks of the white rose as Edward's troops set off on their bid to crush the northern menace and put an end to Henry and Margaret. Now, on this cold March morning, those southern



Once the two sides met, the field soon became littered with the dead and dying, with many simply submitting to fatigue from the prolonged melee

> "Thousands of southern volunteers quickly swelled the ranks of the white rose as Edward's troops set off on their bid to crush the northern menace"

volunteers are moving into position. Many of these are farmers, artisans and yeomen gentry and here they stand alongside those recruited in the Conditions of Array – a law-enforced system of enlistment employed by both sides – as well as alongside the loyal household men-at-arms that serve the peerage.

The Yorkists approach

As they crest the plateau's southern ridge, the Yorkists sight for the first time the Lancastrians on the northern slope and a cacophonous cheer cracks the morning air. This is a conflict marked not only by political intrigue and perennial machinations among the nobles, but also by blood-feuds and petty rivalries among all men. More than a few among the thousands of Englishmen on the field are keen to settle scores with one another.

Soon snow begins to fall and then a torrent of sleet. The wind changes direction and drives northwards into the faces of the Lancastrians, obscuring their vision and movement. Seizing the moment, Lord Fauconberg orders the Yorkist archers forward and a body of troops that might

Lancastrians	Yorkists
TROOPS 25,000	TROOPS 20,000
LOSSES C.9,000	LOSSES C.6,000
LEADER KING HENRY VI	LEADER KING EDWARD IV
LEADERS ON THE FIELD • Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset • Lord Clifford (who was killed at Ferrybridge on March 28) • Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland	LEADERS ON THE FIELD • Edward, Duke of March (who acclaimed King Edward IV) • Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick • William Neville, Lord Fauconberg

An example of 15th-century armour, worn only by those lucky enough to afford it comprise as many as 10,000 men shuffles northwards. Longbow men are the core component of every English army, having won great victories in the Hundred Years War – at Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt and Verneuil. The current law of the land demands that all men not only own a longbow but also practise with it on the village butts.

In the Wars of the Roses, however, both sides count excellent archers among their number, which neuters their potency. This means that pitched battles in England during the 15th century are invariably slugging matches between hordes of heavily armoured men – brutal, bone-crushing struggles fought with poleaxe and glaive, war-hammer and mace. Fauconberg, though, is a wily old campaigner and realises that the change in the wind's direction gives his men the advantage. With the wind at their backs, their arrows will carry further into the enemy host, while the driving wind and sleet will hinder the Lancastrian archers' aim and distance when they eventually loose their arrows in reply.

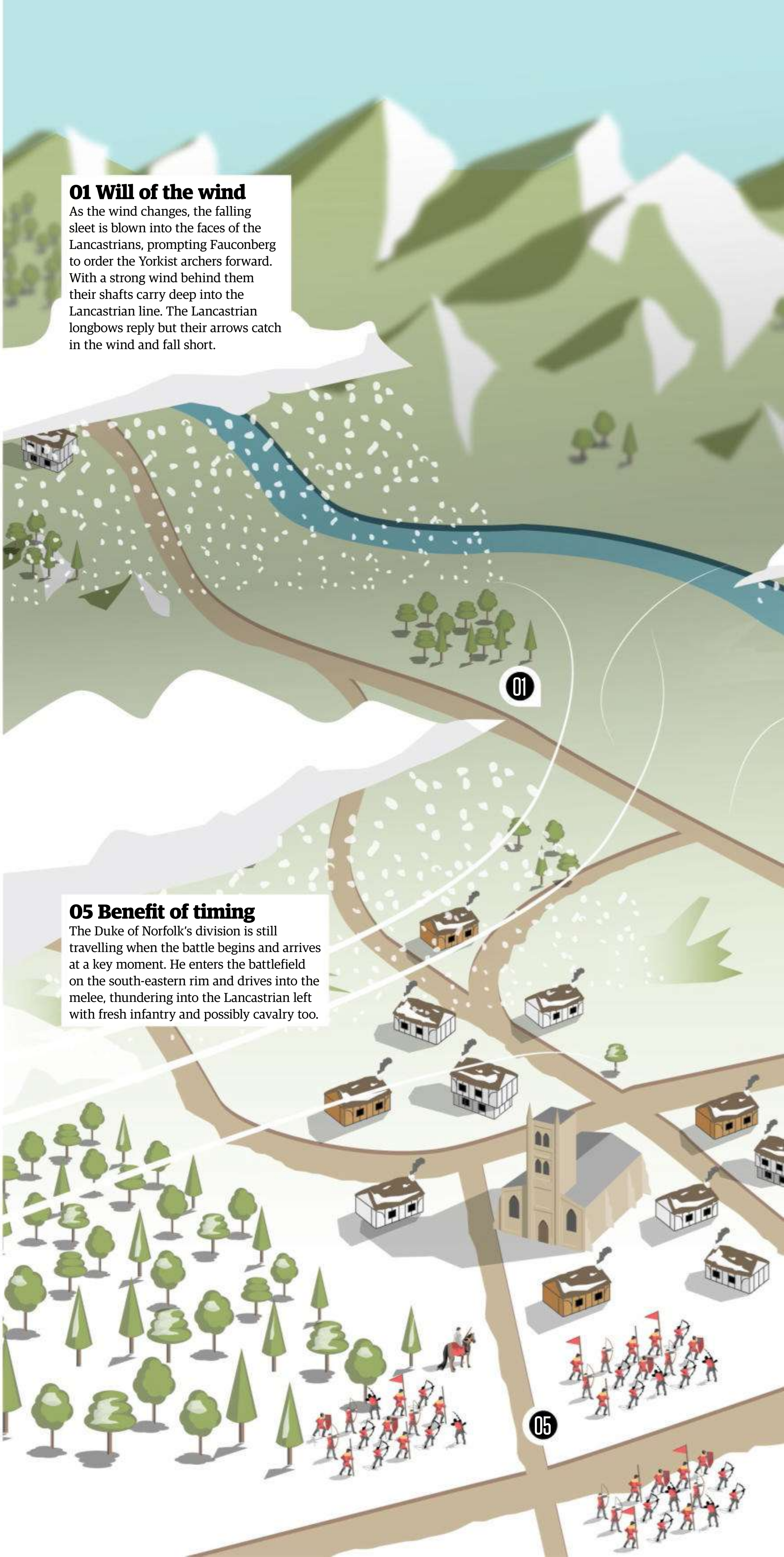
It's an ingenious plan and his archers unleash a murderous volley that darkens further the gloomy, sleet-bedighted skies. The Lancastrians return fire, but their arrows catch in the wind and fall short of their targets. The Yorkists continue their fusillade, standing out of range of the Lancastrian arrows and causing ever-greater consternation among the enemy ranks; their continuous volleys begin to take a toll. The Lancastrians maintain their own barrage but it has little effect. In fact, once the Yorkist bowmen finish their own sheaves, many move forward to pluck the Lancastrian arrows from the ground in front and send them whistling back from whence they came.

This continued assault maddens the Lancastrian host. Shields are no longer carried in combat and even the heavily armoured lords and knights suffer beneath Fauconberg's relentless barrage. The Lancastrian warlord, Somerset, realising that his casualties are growing, knows that he must move his men forward though the arrow storm and engage the Yorkists. He holds the numerical advantage, and even if he surrenders the higher ground his chances are still good. If he wins the day, the Yorkist cause is surely doomed. Resolutely, he orders the advance.

The height of battle

Fauconberg, having achieved his ambition and forced Somerset from his strategically advantageous position, now orders his archers to dissolve through the main body of armoured troops behind, purposefully leaving behind thousands of arrows stuck upright in the ground, which the wily old lord knows will hinder the Lancastrian advance. It is time for the plate-clad men-at-arms to decide the day and the veteran Earl of Warwick along with the young King Edward – a lad of just 19 years, but a giant in size, stature and military accomplishment – rally their men before the final reckoning.

The field is now awash with steel. The Lancastrian army comes thundering down the

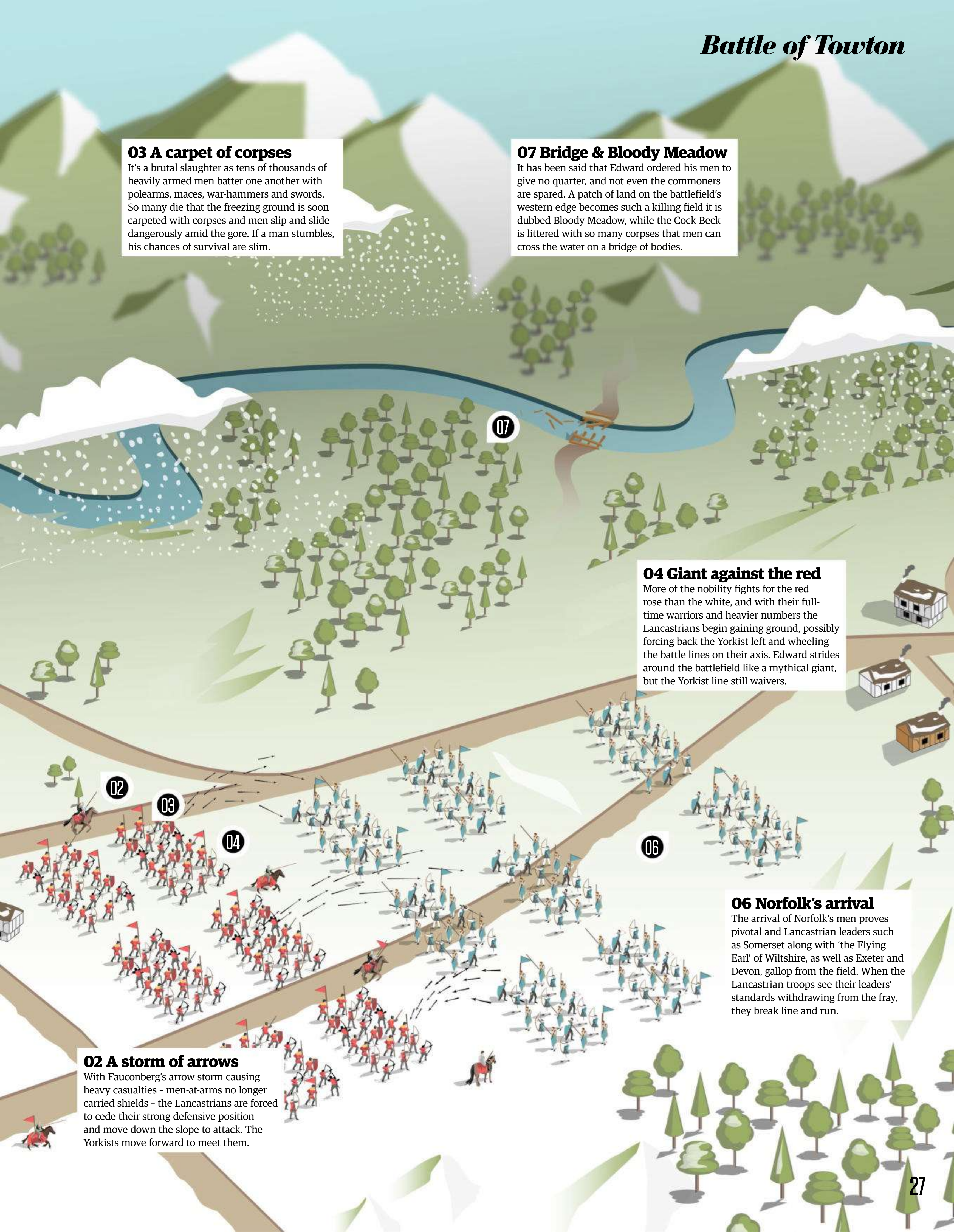


01 Will of the wind

As the wind changes, the falling sleet is blown into the faces of the Lancastrians, prompting Fauconberg to order the Yorkist archers forward. With a strong wind behind them their shafts carry deep into the Lancastrian line. The Lancastrian longbows reply but their arrows catch in the wind and fall short.

05 Benefit of timing

The Duke of Norfolk's division is still travelling when the battle begins and arrives at a key moment. He enters the battlefield on the south-eastern rim and drives into the melee, thundering into the Lancastrian left with fresh infantry and possibly cavalry too.



03 A carpet of corpses

It's a brutal slaughter as tens of thousands of heavily armed men batter one another with polearms, maces, war-hammers and swords. So many die that the freezing ground is soon carpeted with corpses and men slip and slide dangerously amid the gore. If a man stumbles, his chances of survival are slim.

07 Bridge & Bloody Meadow

It has been said that Edward ordered his men to give no quarter, and not even the commoners are spared. A patch of land on the battlefield's western edge becomes such a killing field it is dubbed Bloody Meadow, while the Cock Beck is littered with so many corpses that men can cross the water on a bridge of bodies.

04 Giant against the red

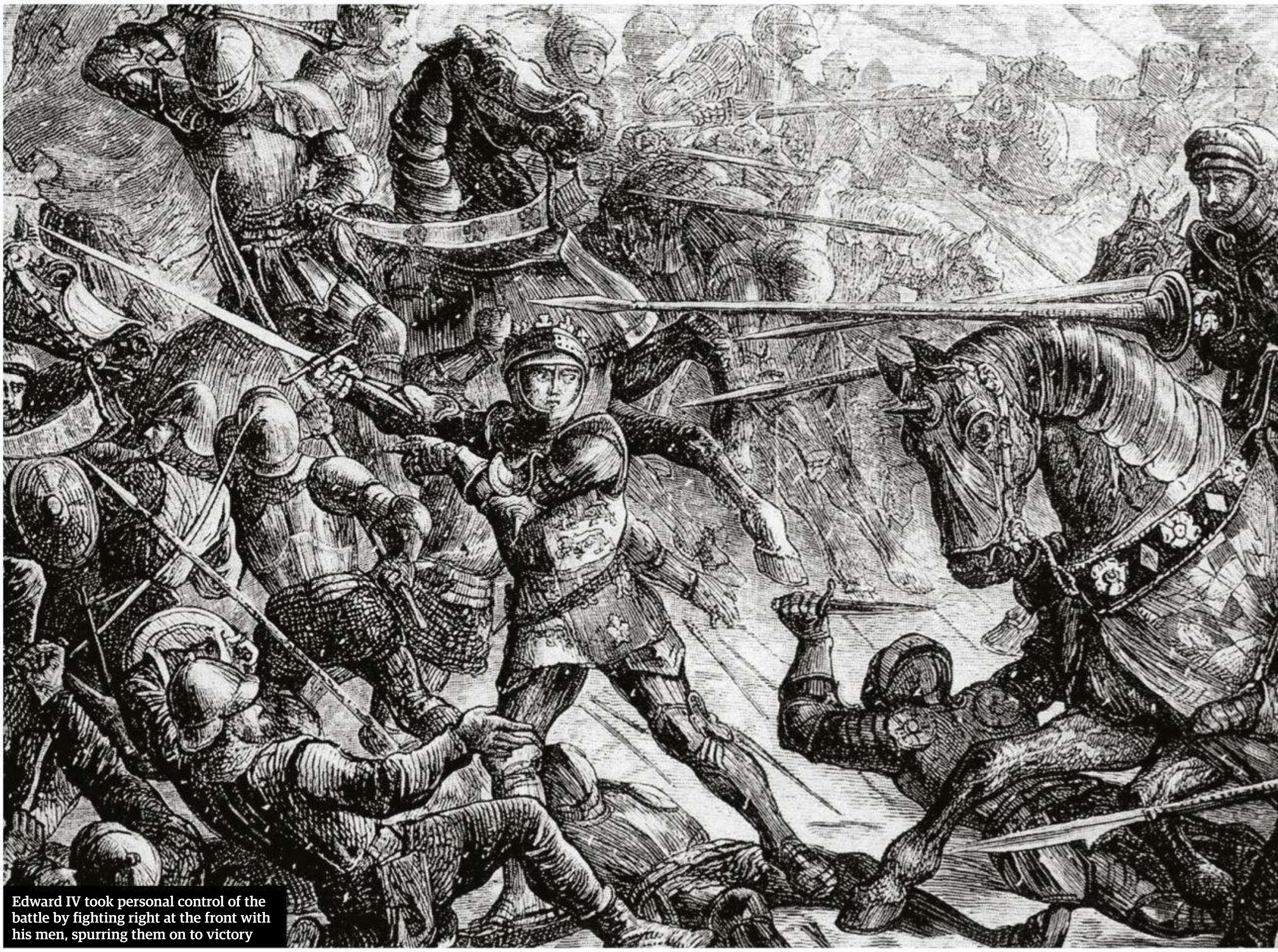
More of the nobility fights for the red rose than the white, and with their full-time warriors and heavier numbers the Lancastrians begin gaining ground, possibly forcing back the Yorkist left and wheeling the battle lines on their axis. Edward strides around the battlefield like a mythical giant, but the Yorkist line still waivers.

06 Norfolk's arrival

The arrival of Norfolk's men proves pivotal and Lancastrian leaders such as Somerset along with 'the Flying Earl' of Wiltshire, as well as Exeter and Devon, gallop from the field. When the Lancastrian troops see their leaders' standards withdrawing from the fray, they break line and run.

02 A storm of arrows

With Fauconberg's arrow storm causing heavy casualties – men-at-arms no longer carried shields – the Lancastrians are forced to cede their strong defensive position and move down the slope to attack. The Yorkists move forward to meet them.



Edward IV took personal control of the battle by fighting right at the front with his men, spurring them on to victory

slope, crashing in waves upon the waiting Yorkist host. The slugging match begins and thousands of men hack at one another with battle-axe and bill. The Earl of Warwick, holding the Yorkist centre and right flank, absorbs a violent assault from the Lancastrian left, commanded by the Earl of Northumberland. The Lancastrians' greater numbers start to tell and the Yorkists lose ground. If the Lancastrians can push them back over the southern slope their line will break and a rout will ensue. Warwick appeals for help and messengers are quickly sent to King Edward, who responds by rushing in with his army's reserve and fighting like a man possessed.

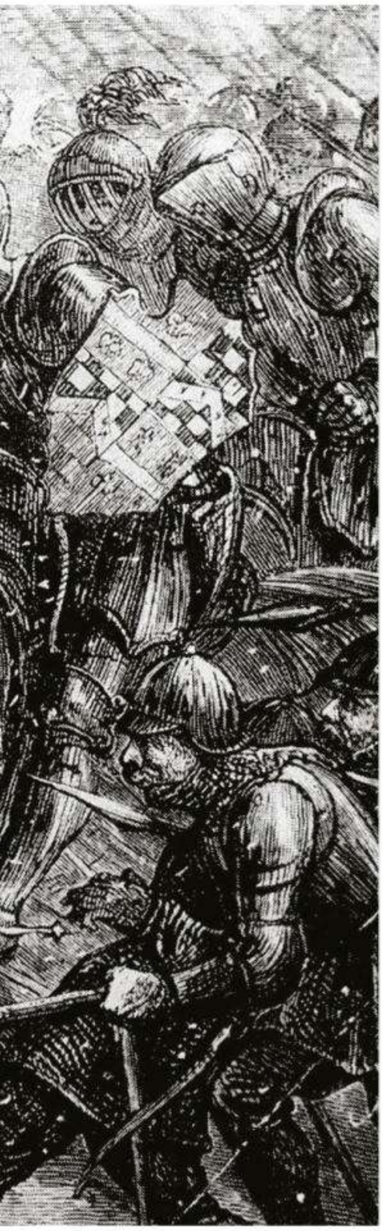
During the 15th century, it was common for lords and nobles fight amid the press, rallying their troops beneath their fluttering insignia and now as Edward enters the killing zone like a fabled hero of old, he lays about his enemy with his long reach, breaking bones and crushing skulls, moving constantly to bolster his trembling battle-line.

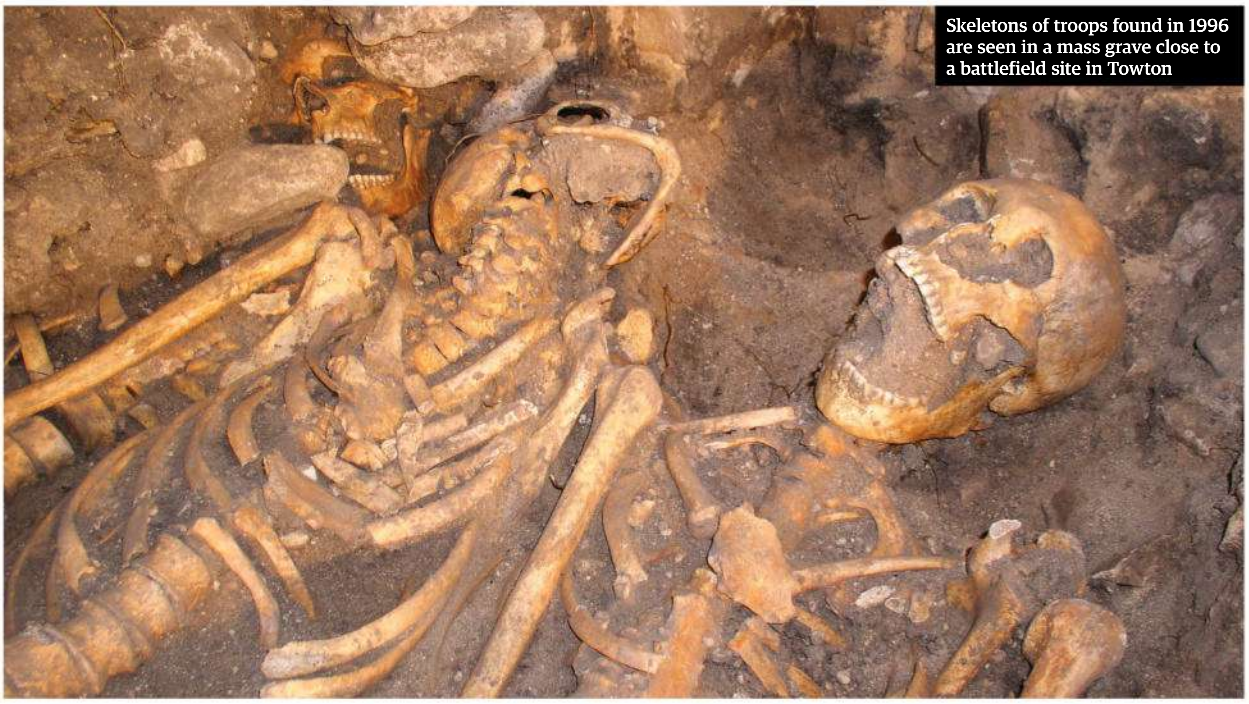
> "The Lancastrian army comes thundering down the slope, crashing in waves upon the waiting Yorkist host"

The field is now heaped high with the dead and dying, and men are slipping on the gore underfoot. For all Edward's prowess, his line still waivers. The superior Lancastrian soldiery are making their presence felt and Edward's reserve is thinning out. The Yorkist's left wing is pushed back and the battle line starts to turn on its axis. With a little more effort, the Lancastrians will take the day – Edward's future hangs in the balance.

Then, emerging from the snowstorm comes the Yorkist army's errant division – the Duke of Norfolk's troops have arrived at last. Moving up the battlefield's eastern edge they attack with fresh vigour, some mounted and some on foot, cascading down upon the Lancastrian left. The move is decisive and Somerset and a number of leading Lancastrian lords, realising that the day is now against them, mount their steeds and gallop away. Once the Lancastrian force sees its commanders' pennants streaming from the field, the remainder turn on their heels and run. The Lancastrian line is broken and a bloody slaughter ensues.

Men throw down weapons and strip off armour as they run for safety, but few make it. Many head westwards and meet the Cock Beck on the Lancastrian right. The ground is soon slaked with the blood of countless men, earning it the title: Bloody Meadow. The Yorkist 'prickers' are on the field – mounted men who ride down the fleeing infantry. Wielding war-hammer and mace, they





Skeletons of troops found in 1996 are seen in a mass grave close to a battlefield site in Towton

The site of the battle as it appears today

A monument to the fallen at Towton

leave the ground carpeted with corpses. No quarter is given; nobleman or commoner, all are fair game.

The many Lancastrians bolting northwards become victims of their own commanders' strategic design; the bridge across the Cock at the battlefield's northern rim was destroyed the day before, leaving the escaping soldiers nowhere to ford the river. With the victorious, adrenaline-fuelled Yorkists bearing down on them, many take to the waters, though their armour, whether tempered steel or heavily padded jacks, drags them under. Hundreds die, falling victim to either the freezing waters or the Yorkist archers shooting at the floundering men as if they were fish in a barrel. It's not long before the waters are thick with dead, and both pursuers and pursued can now cross the river on a bridge of bodies.

England paid the price

The slaughter unleashed at Towton stands unparalleled in English history. The day claimed the lives of the Earl of Northumberland along with Lords Dacre, Mauley, Welles and Willoughby along with Sir Anthony Trollope, who all died courtesy of wounds received on the battlefield, while Edward himself is said to have executed 42 Lancastrian knights after the battle's denouement. Recent archaeological explorations have unearthed some truly gruesome finds, including a grave pit where evidence suggests that a good many unarmed men were viciously hacked down as they sought clemency from their attackers.

Many contemporary chronicles number the Towton dead at more than 30,000 and while modern scholars view this as an exaggeration, most agree that somewhere in the region of 15,000 men perished on that snowbound field near York. Just a few days after the battle, Lord Chancellor George Neville wrote to the papal legate, Francesco Coppini, claiming that so many had fallen that 'dead bodies were seen to cover an area six miles long by three broad'.

Though England paid a heavy price that day, Edward VI had claimed his kingdom. Though not as decisive or famous as the Battle of Bosworth, Towton remains a horrific and sombre name worthy of remembrance in English history.

> "Moving up the battlefield's eastern edge they attack with fresh vigour, some mounted and some on foot, cascading down upon the Lancastrian left"

© Corbis; Alamy; Ed Crooks; Osprey Publishing

4 May 1471

Battle of Tewkesbury

The bloody showdown between the House of York and House of Lancaster is seen as one of the decisive battles of the Wars of the Roses

The matriarch of the Lancastrian cause and wife of the former king, Margaret of Anjou was back in the country seeking support. Landing in Weymouth, England, she went on the march, quickly gaining support from Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and elsewhere. After leaving Bristol, which she briefly made her base, she made towards the city of Gloucester, in the hope she could gain entry to its essential bridge crossing over the River Severn and into Wales. However, the city refused to open its gates to Margaret's force, and she was forced to march further north, to the next crossing which was located at Tewkesbury.

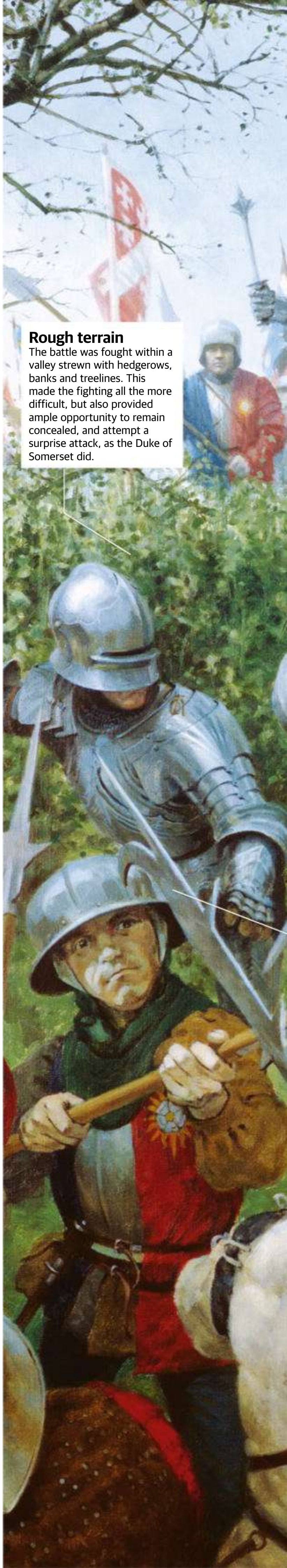
Margaret wasn't the only recent arrival in England, however. Edward of York, or Edward IV of England, landed in the north of England in March 1471. He held the backing of his brothers the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence, and was himself bent on taking back the crown he had only recently lost during a revolt led chiefly by the Earl of Warwick, so-called 'the Kingmaker'. Warwick had previously supported the Yorkist cause, so his betrayal had cut Edward to the core and ultimately cost him his crown.

> "He was bent on taking back the crown he had only recently lost"

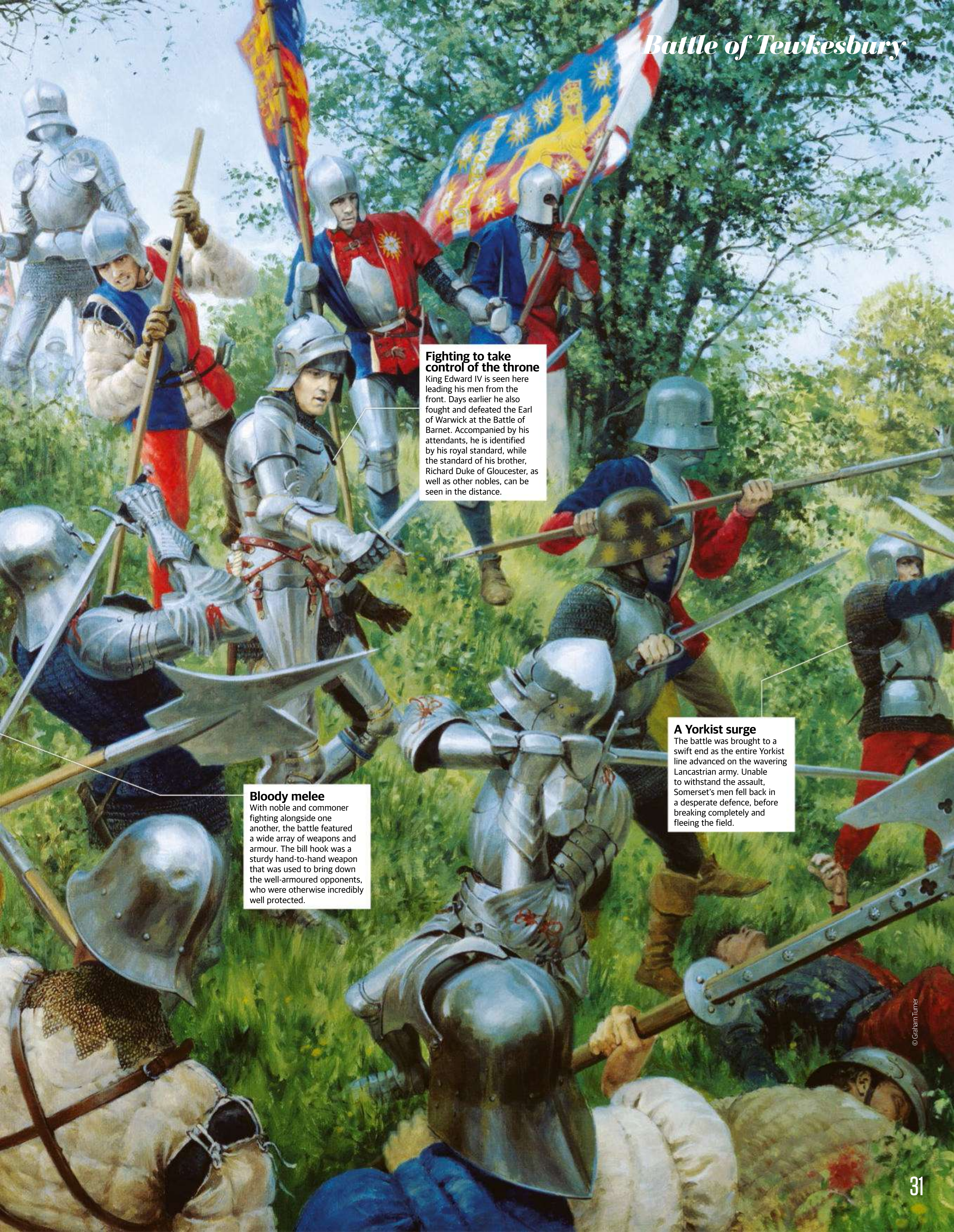
On the very day Margaret landed in Weymouth, Edward and Warwick faced one another at the Battle of Barnet, just days after the Yorkist force had occupied London. Soon after the queen and her son, Edward Prince of Wales, landed in the west of England, they were immediately greeted by the news of Warwick's defeat and death at the hands of the Yorkist force. Now the queen was desperate to find safety, wherever she could find it.

For the now-restored King Edward IV and his renewed force, buoyed by their victory at Barnet, Margaret was the only obstacle standing in the way of a lasting peace. Pursuing the Lancastrians near the Welsh border, they finally caught up with their prey near Tewkesbury, where the Duke of Somerset (the commander of the Lancastrian vanguard) chose to turn and fight rather than attempt a potentially disastrous crossing while under attack.

After the battle had died down, many soldiers fled to Tewkesbury Abbey to seek sanctuary from the pursuing Yorkists – among them was the Duke of Somerset who had miraculously survived the battle despite being right in the thick of the fighting. However, soon Edward and his men caught up with the fleeing army, broke into the Abbey and took every Lancastrian prisoner. They were put on show-trials and promptly executed just days later. Soon Margaret herself was taken prisoner, and her husband Henry VI died in suspicious circumstances in his London cell. It looked to all that the Lancastrian threat had finally passed, and the wars would be over.



Rough terrain
The battle was fought within a valley strewn with hedgerows, banks and treelines. This made the fighting all the more difficult, but also provided ample opportunity to remain concealed, and attempt a surprise attack, as the Duke of Somerset did.



Fighting to take control of the throne
King Edward IV is seen here leading his men from the front. Days earlier he also fought and defeated the Earl of Warwick at the Battle of Barnet. Accompanied by his attendants, he is identified by his royal standard, while the standard of his brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester, as well as other nobles, can be seen in the distance.

Bloody melee
With noble and commoner fighting alongside one another, the battle featured a wide array of weapons and armour. The bill hook was a sturdy hand-to-hand weapon that was used to bring down the well-armoured opponents, who were otherwise incredibly well protected.

A Yorkist surge
The battle was brought to a swift end as the entire Yorkist line advanced on the wavering Lancastrian army. Unable to withstand the assault, Somerset's men fell back in a desperate defence, before breaking completely and fleeing the field.

© Graham Turner

Lancastrian army

Troops: c.6,000

Margaret Anjou

Leader
The fiery head of the Lancaster dynasty did not lead her troops personally, but she held together the loyalty of the army

Strengths
Her perceived legitimacy as queen commanded widespread popularity and loyalty in the kingdom

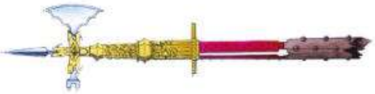
Weaknesses
Without being on the battlefield personally, Margaret had to place all her trust in her commanders

Somerset's fellowship

Key unit
With his hand-picked group of knights, The Duke of Somerset hoped he could hit the Yorkist army where it least expected

Strengths
Some of the best fighters available, all brave and determined

Weaknesses
Their limited numbers meant they were quickly outflanked



Pole axe

Key weapon
A devastating weapon against both armoured and mounted troops

Strengths
A long reach and heavy blade was easy to use and make

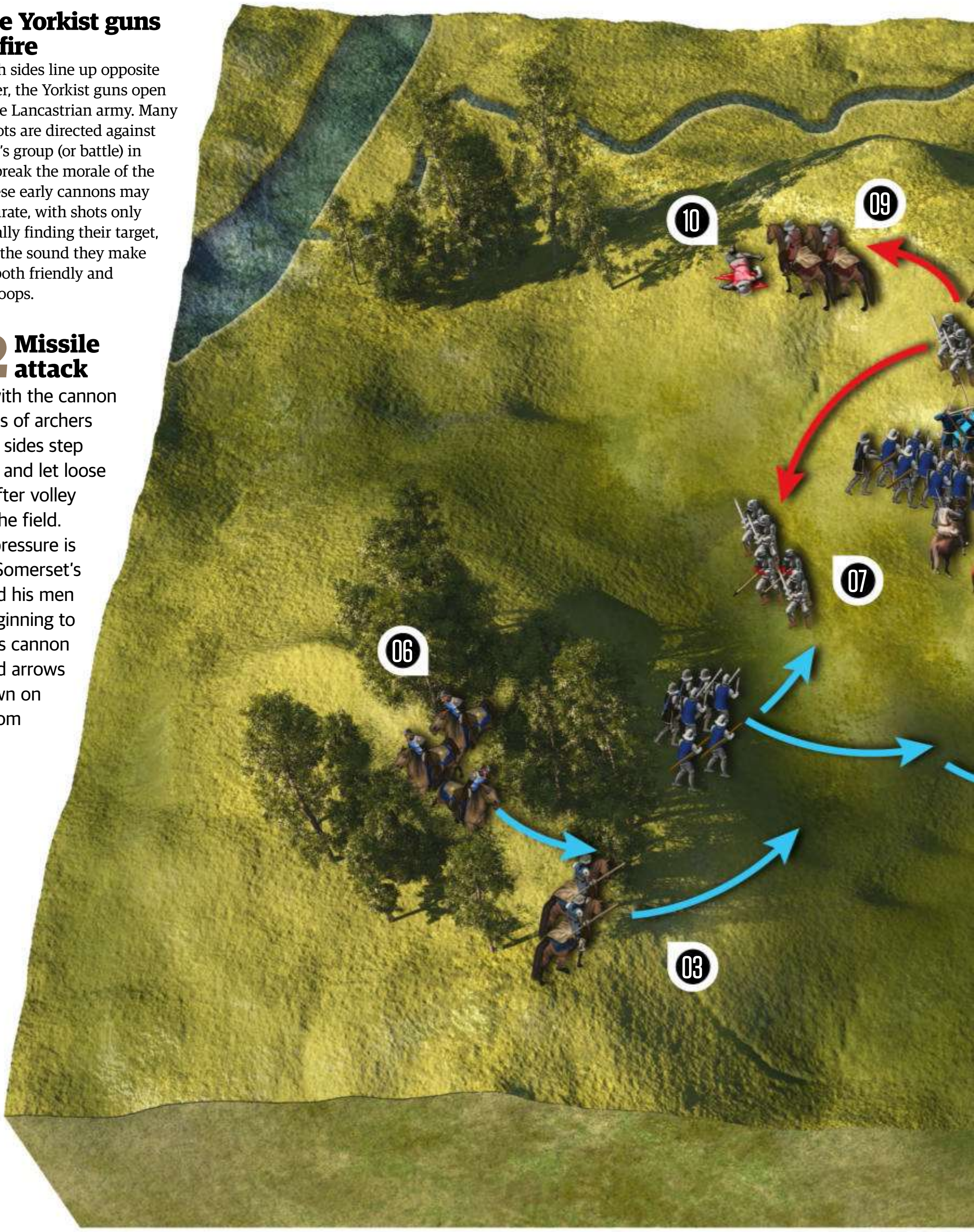
Weaknesses
Unwieldy in close quarters and very heavy to march with

01 The Yorkist guns open fire

After both sides line up opposite each other, the Yorkist guns open fire on the Lancastrian army. Many of the shots are directed against Somerset's group (or battle) in order to break the morale of the men. These early cannons may be inaccurate, with shots only occasionally finding their target, but even the sound they make terrifies both friendly and enemy troops.

02 Missile attack

Along with the cannon fire, lines of archers on both sides step forward and let loose volley after volley across the field. Again, pressure is put on Somerset's unit, and his men now beginning to waver as cannon balls and arrows rain down on them from above.



03 Somerset manoeuvres

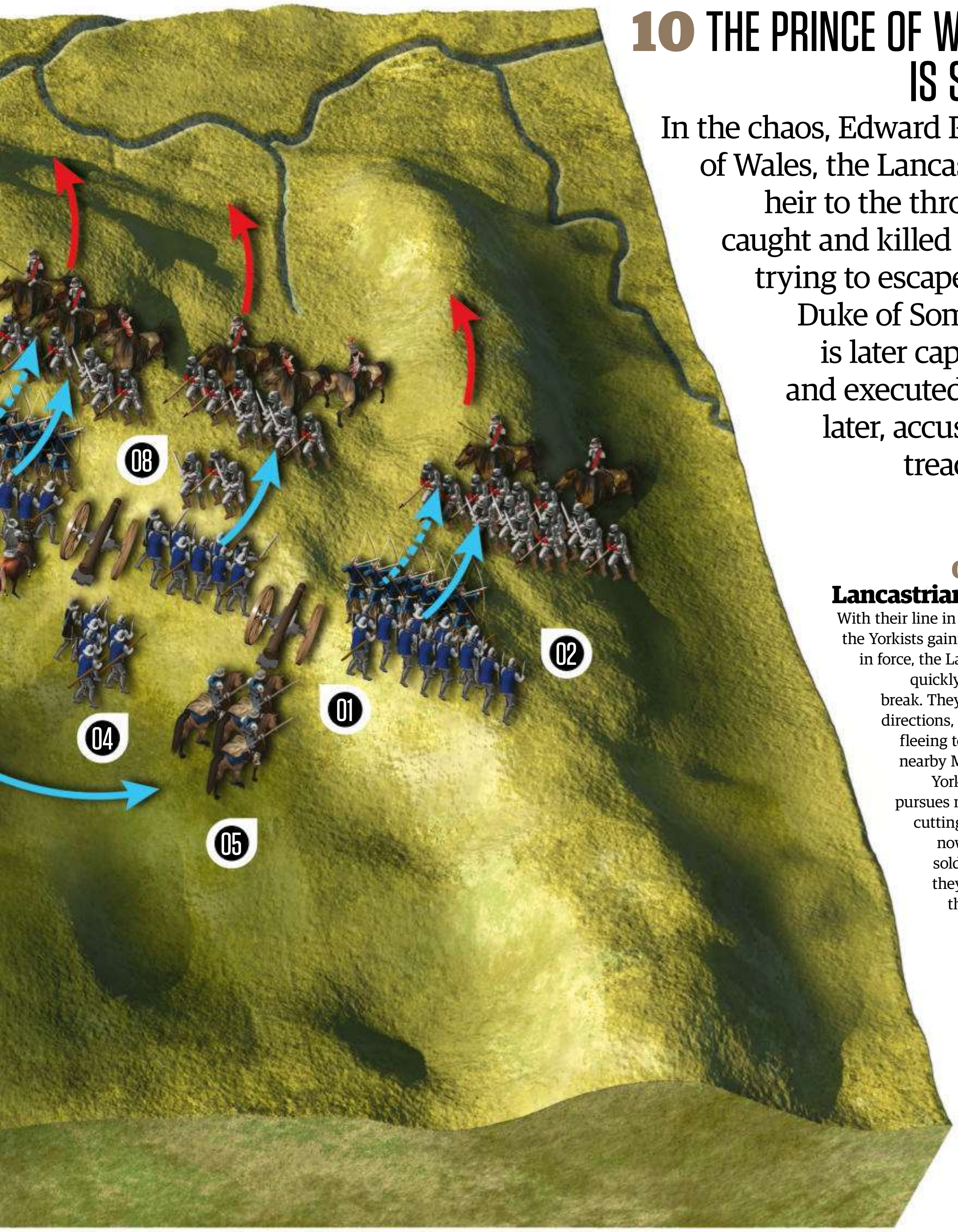
With a line of men shielding him from the view of the enemy, Somerset gathers together a small group of his most loyal and skilled fighters. He moves west, towards a wooded area on the right of the Lancastrian line, and begins to move down Lincoln Green Lane, along the bottom of the valley. He is making his way to King Edward directly, and to help create a distraction for the main army.

04 Somerset strikes

Emerging from their hidden path, Somerset and his men now find themselves in the open at the brow of the hill the Yorkist army is deployed on. Nevertheless they charge headlong into Edward's centre, attempting not only to take them by surprise, but kill the king and so end the battle. Seeing Somerset's charge in time, Edward's men are able to line up and defend their king.

05 EDWARD PUSHES BACK

With the element of surprise gone, and now heavily outnumbered, Somerset and his men are forced back, into the left flank of the Yorkist army, under command of Richard Duke of Gloucester.



10 THE PRINCE OF WALES IS SLAIN

In the chaos, Edward Prince of Wales, the Lancastrian heir to the throne, is caught and killed while trying to escape. The Duke of Somerset is later captured and executed days later, accused of treachery.

09 The Lancastrians rout

With their line in chaos, and the Yorkists gaining ground in force, the Lancastrians quickly panic and break. They rout in all directions, with many fleeing towards the nearby Mill stream. Yorkist cavalry pursues mercilessly, cutting down the now scattered soldiers before they can reach the safety of the river.

06 Edward's cavalry charges

The 200 cavalry Edward had kept hidden further to the west, beyond the path Somerset and his men had taken, now charge into the fray. Crossing the hedgerows carefully, they emerge at the top of the hill and collide into the rear of Somerset and his men. The small Lancastrian force is now completely surrounded. Meanwhile the rest of his army, under command of Wenlock and Devon, do not commit to the melee to support their leader.

07 Somerset falls back

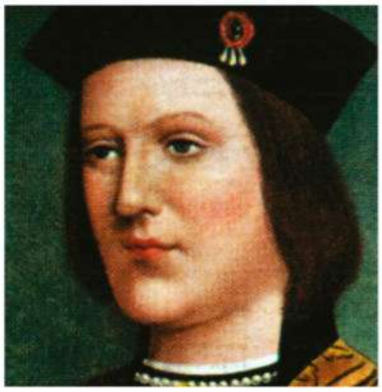
Seeing that all is lost, Somerset's men rout in all directions. Many head west into the trees, while others desperately try to reach their own lines again. Somerset manages to rejoin his army, where he scolds Wenlock for not committing to the fight. Some records even recount Somerset killing Wenlock with an axe to the head.

08 The Yorkists advance

Seeing the enemy wavering, Edward orders his forces to advance. All three of his battles now charge across the field towards the enemy, with the King and his brother the Duke of Gloucester at the heads of their men. They quickly gain the line of hedges at the front of their enemy's position, and press forward relentlessly.

Yorkist army

Troops: 5,000
Cavalry: 200



Edward IV

Leader
After recently retaking his throne, the Yorkist king was prepared to finally wipe out the opposition

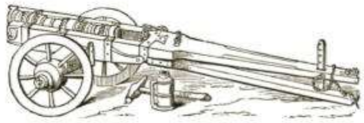
Strengths
The loyalty of an experienced army buoyed by its recent victory

Spear cavalry

Key unit
Edward's hidden unit of mounted troops proved fatal to the Lancastrian force

Strengths
Rapidly charging from cover to easily outflank the enemy

Weaknesses
Uneven terrain strewn with hedgerows were difficult to ride across



Medieval cannon

Key weapon
The Yorkists held a terrifying, if not always reliable, weapon

Strengths
A thunderous blast would unnerve the enemy, damaging morale immensely

Weaknesses
Misfires and lack of accuracy made these guns less useful for causing casualties

© Getty; Alamy; Nicolle Fuller/Sayo Studio

Dawn of the Tudors

During the Wars of the Roses, many vied to wear the crown of England, but an unlikely claimant silenced the battle drums to become king

The small fleet set sail from France on 1 August 1485. Seven days later, the babble of mostly French voices and Scottish accents were heard on Welsh soil as the force made land at Milford Haven. They were soldiers of fortune, 2,000 strong at most, employed to fulfil a simple mission - seize the crown of England for their figurehead. This 'man who would be king' was Henry Tudor. His father, Edmund Tudor, had died before he was born. However, his mother, Margaret Beaufort, was very much alive. Both a widow and a mother before her 14th birthday, she later came to see that if events and circumstances turned sufficiently in her only son's favour, England's throne could be his. On 7 August, on the Pembrokeshire coast, he was closer than he'd ever been.

The royal blood in his veins was thin - his mother was a descendant of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and his mistress, Katherine Swynford, the pair later marrying to legitimise the line - but it was there. The Milford Haven landing site was near to where Henry was born, at Pembroke Castle, in 1457. King Henry VI had been the reigning monarch then. Edmund, Henry Tudor's father, and his uncle, Jasper, shared the same mother as the king, who looked favourably upon the offspring of her second marriage. Treating his half-brothers well was one of Henry VI's few virtues. Hindered by bouts of mental illness, his reign was ill starred. During it, he weakly allowed courtiers, especially the Beaufort family, and his wife, Margaret of Anjou, to grab power and wealth.

The king's administration was increasingly incompetent and corrupt. The Hundred Years' War with France, so ably prosecuted by his father, Henry V, had been lost in 1453, leaving the economy badly damaged. The House of Lancaster, from which Henry VI hailed, was hugely discredited, especially among many of the unfavoured nobility. When mental illness incapacitated the king, a power struggle began for control of the country. The queen, supported by the Duke of Somerset - Margaret Beaufort's uncle - pushed to be made regent, but it was Richard, Duke of York, one of the country's richest landowners, who was made protector of the realm. As a direct descendant of Edward III, York had almost as strong a claim to the throne as the present Lancastrian king, yet at that time he remained loyal. As protector, he imprisoned Somerset and attempted to curb the corruption within the administration. However, when King Henry VI recovered his faculties, York was dismissed and Somerset released to resume his role at court.

Sidelined, watching his decisions as protector reversed, and vulnerable to plots against him by Somerset, York acted. Together with the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury, they raised an army of some 3,000 men. This force intercepted Henry and his supporters, travelling from London to Leicester, at St Albans. The Yorkist demands for Somerset to be arrested were rejected, and a brief battle through the streets of the town began. Somerset was killed, as were other Lancastrian nobles, while the king was injured by an arrow. It was 1455, and the Wars of the Roses had begun.

They might have ended there and then had York taken the crown, but, perhaps proving his loyalty, he didn't. Instead he reaffirmed Henry's right to the throne and once again acted as protector when the king suffered further mental problems. An uneasy peace prevailed until the queen and allies gathered an army of Lancastrian sympathisers to challenge the Yorkists again, forcing York and Salisbury to flee the country. The victory was followed

Pembroke Castle, birthplace of Henry Tudor and where he was brought up in the care of his uncle Jasper

by the attainting of leading York nobles, which meant they were to lose their titles and lands to the crown. Ruined if they let it stand, the Yorkists rallied and fought back, with the Earl of Warwick, who had been garrisoned in Calais, returning to England to bolster their cause. Warwick won a key battle at Northampton, defeated the king, and York at last formally laid claim to the throne via Parliament's Act of Accord. This allowed Henry VI to remain king, but on his death, succession would pass to York's family.

Yet before 1460 was out, York was dead, killed at the Battle of Wakefield. His title passed to his eldest son, Edward. Seemingly in the ascendancy, the queen's Lancastrian army marched on London, but the city sealed its gates to her, instead proclaiming the new Duke of York as monarch. Weeks later, in March 1461, he won a crucial conflict at Towton Moor. It was the bloodiest battle of the Wars; it left the Lancastrian army in tatters, while the victor returned to London as King Edward IV.

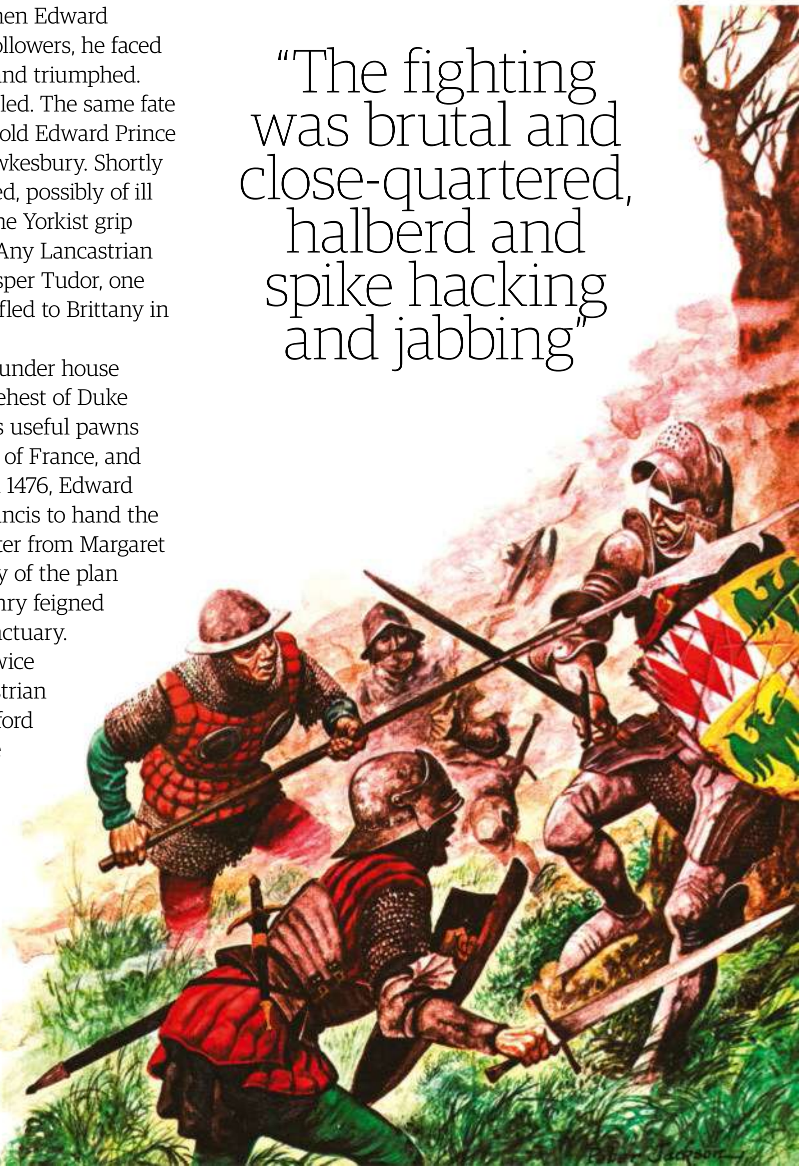
Aged four at the time, Henry Tudor was in the care of his uncle Jasper at Pembroke Castle in Wales. Jasper was a loyal Lancastrian, fighting in vain to keep the castle out of Yorkist hands. It fell to William Herbert, and young Henry found himself in Herbert's household in 1469. That year, however, the Wars resumed following a fall out between Edward IV and Warwick. The latter switched sides to orchestrate a coup against the king, who fled to the continent. Henry VI, a prisoner in the Tower of London for five years, was released and restored to the throne. In this brief Lancastrian revival, Herbert was executed after the Battle of Edgecote Moor, and Henry Tudor went back to his uncle.

Events turned swiftly again when Edward returned to England. Gathering followers, he faced Warwick at the Battle of Barnet, and triumphed. Warwick, 'the kingmaker', was killed. The same fate befell Henry VI's heir, the 17-year-old Edward Prince of Wales, at the next battle, at Tewkesbury. Shortly after, the recaptured Henry VI died, possibly of ill health, but most likely murder. The Yorkist grip on the crown was now vice like. Any Lancastrian noble or supporter was at risk. Jasper Tudor, one of the most prominent still alive, fled to Brittany in 1471, taking Henry with him.

Partly under protection, partly under house arrest, they lived in exile at the behest of Duke Francis II, who viewed the pair as useful pawns in his dispute with King Louis XI of France, and France's dispute with England. In 1476, Edward IV seemed to have persuaded Francis to hand the pair back for a payment, but a letter from Margaret Beaufort alerted Jasper and Henry of the plan before it could be carried out. Henry feigned illness before they escaped to sanctuary.

Henry's mother had married twice more by then. Despite her Lancastrian roots, her marriage to Henry Stafford was harmonious, even though he fought for the Yorkists and died from wounds helping Edward IV triumph at Barnet. Her next marriage, in 1472, seems a calculated alliance. Her new husband was Thomas Lord Stanley, a wealthy landowner from the north west of England, and prominent

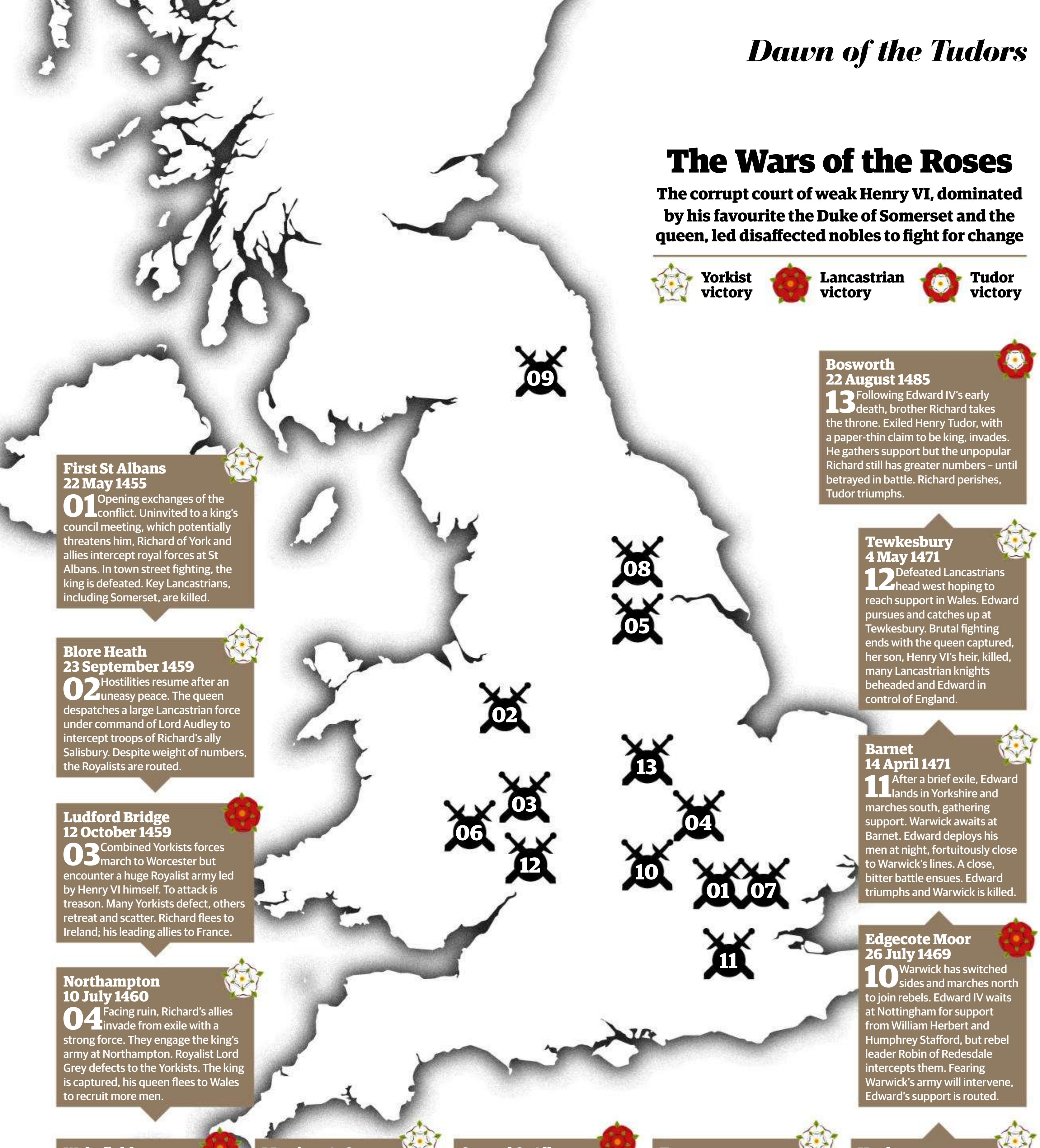
> "The fighting was brutal and close-quartered, halberd and spike hacking and jabbing"



The Wars of the Roses

The corrupt court of weak Henry VI, dominated by his favourite the Duke of Somerset and the queen, led disaffected nobles to fight for change

Yorkist victory **Lancastrian victory** **Tudor victory**



First St Albans
22 May 1455

01 Opening exchanges of the conflict. Uninvited to a king's council meeting, which potentially threatens him, Richard of York and allies intercept royal forces at St Albans. In town street fighting, the king is defeated. Key Lancastrians, including Somerset, are killed.

Blore Heath
23 September 1459

02 Hostilities resume after an uneasy peace. The queen despatches a large Lancastrian force under command of Lord Audley to intercept troops of Richard's ally Salisbury. Despite weight of numbers, the Royalists are routed.

Ludford Bridge
12 October 1459

03 Combined Yorkists forces march to Worcester but encounter a huge Royalist army led by Henry VI himself. To attack is treason. Many Yorkists defect, others retreat and scatter. Richard flees to Ireland; his leading allies to France.

Northampton
10 July 1460

04 Facing ruin, Richard's allies invade from exile with a strong force. They engage the king's army at Northampton. Royalist Lord Grey defects to the Yorkists. The king is captured, his queen flees to Wales to recruit more men.

Wakefield
30 December 1460

05 From relative safety in Sandal Castle, Richard inexplicably leaves to attack a besieging Lancastrian force. It's far stronger in number than thought. Richard is slain, other Yorkist nobles captured and unchivalrously beheaded. Richard's son assumes his title.

Mortimer's Cross
2 February 1461

06 Edward's force, marching east, learns Jasper Tudor-led Lancastrians are nearby in Wales. Edward changes direction to engage. His archers break opposition lines of less committed mercenaries. Jasper escapes the rout but captured nobles are slaughtered.

Second St Albans
17 February 1461

07 Warwick, holding the king, waits for Edward's men at St Albans. Before they arrive, a Lancastrian force attacks, overrunning the Yorkists in bloody fighting. Warwick retreats leaving the king, guarded for protection, under a tree. The guards are beheaded.

Towton
29 March 1461

08 With Lancastrians regrouping at York city, Edward, proclaiming himself king, marches north, gathering support. Two mighty armies clash in a snowstorm at Towton. Thousands die but Edward prevails. Henry VI, his queen and their son flee to Scotland.

Hexham
15 May 1464

09 Edward IV has the throne. Henry VI is in Scotland and his family is in France. A Lancastrian force of key nobles is pursued to hostile ground and trounced. Those escaping death on the battlefield are executed. Henry's cause looks doomed.

Edgecote Moor
26 July 1469

10 Warwick has switched sides and marches north to join rebels. Edward IV waits at Nottingham for support from William Herbert and Humphrey Stafford, but rebel leader Robin of Redesdale intercepts them. Fearing Warwick's army will intervene, Edward's support is routed.

Barnet
14 April 1471

11 After a brief exile, Edward lands in Yorkshire and marches south, gathering support. Warwick awaits at Barnet. Edward deploys his men at night, fortuitously close to Warwick's lines. A close, bitter battle ensues. Edward triumphs and Warwick is killed.

Tewkesbury
4 May 1471

12 Defeated Lancastrians head west hoping to reach support in Wales. Edward pursues and catches up at Tewkesbury. Brutal fighting ends with the queen captured, her son, Henry VI's heir, killed, many Lancastrian knights beheaded and Edward in control of England.

Bosworth
22 August 1485

13 Following Edward IV's early death, brother Richard takes the throne. Exiled Henry Tudor, with a paper-thin claim to be king, invades. He gathers support but the unpopular Richard still has greater numbers – until betrayed in battle. Richard perishes, Tudor triumphs.

in Edward IV's court. Given access to it by her marriage, Margaret soon impressed the queen, Elizabeth Woodville, becoming godmother to one of her daughters. No doubt aided by her husband's influence with the king, she sought to end her son's exile and secure his future. If Henry could return to England and regain his title – Earl of Richmond – he might become a husband to Edward's eldest daughter, Princess Elizabeth of York, potentially neutralising some of the bad blood between the two Houses.

Before any of that happened, though, Edward IV unexpectedly died. A commanding figure, tall, good looking and fond of high living, the excesses of his life simply took their toll. Edward's heir, the 12-year-old Prince of Wales, was set for the throne as Edward V. A Regency Council dominated by his uncles would be needed to aid him, but those uncles were at loggerheads. The late king's brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, moved to seize the initiative. The prince was travelling to London with his mother's brother Anthony, Earl Rivers, when Gloucester, supported by the Duke of Buckingham, intercepted them at Stony Stratford. Rivers was arrested for plotting against Gloucester, and would be executed. Gloucester and Buckingham rode into London with the prince. Gloucester was declared protector of the realm.

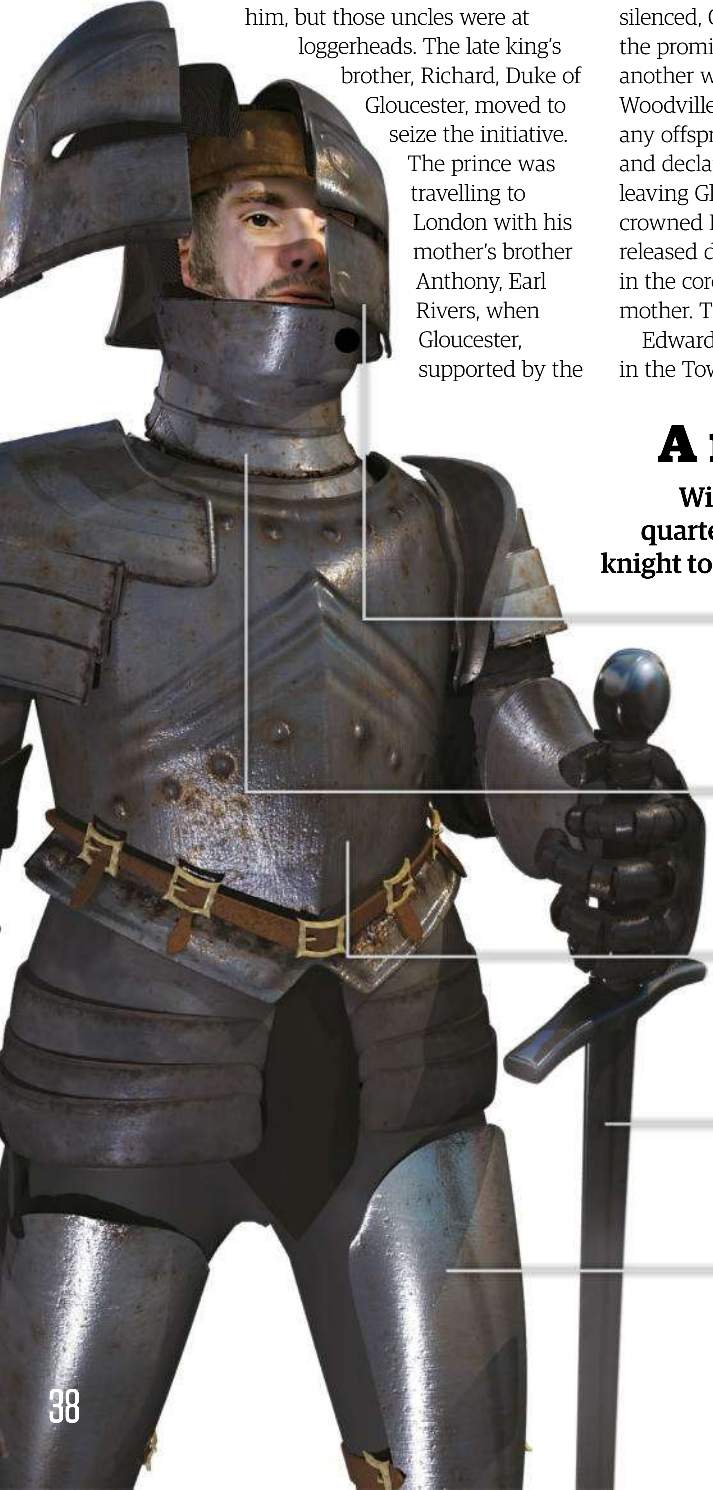
Next, at a meeting supposedly to plan Edward V's coronation, Gloucester accused his dead brother's trusted confidante Lord Hastings, of plotting against him. While Hastings was beheaded without trial, others were arrested and imprisoned, including Thomas Lord Stanley. With Hastings silenced, Gloucester's supporters then asserted that the promiscuous Edward IV had promised to marry another woman before his wedding to Elizabeth Woodville, invalidating the marriage and rendering any offspring from it illegitimate. Parliament agreed and declared the late king's marriage invalid, leaving Gloucester as the Yorkist heir. He was crowned King Richard III on 6 July 1483. Stanley, released days earlier, was reinstated and took part in the coronation, as did his wife, Henry Tudor's mother. The new king's nephews, however, did not.

Edward V and his younger brother remained in the Tower, supposedly under the new king's protection. But while his nephews lived, they posed a threat to Richard's position because opponents could use them as figureheads for a rebellion. He had a clear motive to eliminate them. Shakespeare's version of a child-killing, deformed Richard III is often accepted as fact, yet though it was written to please a later royal household – portraying the pitiless monarch as virtually a pantomime villain – the central charge that he had his brother's sons murdered may have the ring of truth about it.

Rumours of the demise of the princes could not be contained and Richard III said or did nothing publicly to stop them. Dissatisfaction with how he had come to the throne grew, especially beyond his power base of supporters in the north. A rebellion seemed likely. When it came, it was led by an unlikely foe – former ally Buckingham.

The reasons for Buckingham's volte-face are unclear, but he had come under the influence of the persuasive Dr Morton, Bishop of Ely. This shrewd politician had served both Edward IV and the previous Lancastrian regime equally well. His counsel appears to have encouraged Buckingham, while Morton had also contacted Margaret Beaufort.

> "While his nephews lived, they posed a threat to Richard's position as opponents could use them as figureheads"



A medieval knight

With battles decided by fierce close-quarters fighting, it was important for a knight to have protection from head to toe

Helmet
Enclosing the wearer's entire head for maximum protection, Medieval helmets often had hinged visors to allow a clear field of vision when necessary.

Gorget
This steel collar protected the front and back of the neck and covered the neck opening in a complete cuirass. It also covered part of the clavicles and sternum.

Heavy armour
The whole suit could have 250 pieces and weigh up to 50 kilograms. The knight could be so heavy that he could barely move, and if he fell from his horse, he would become defenceless.

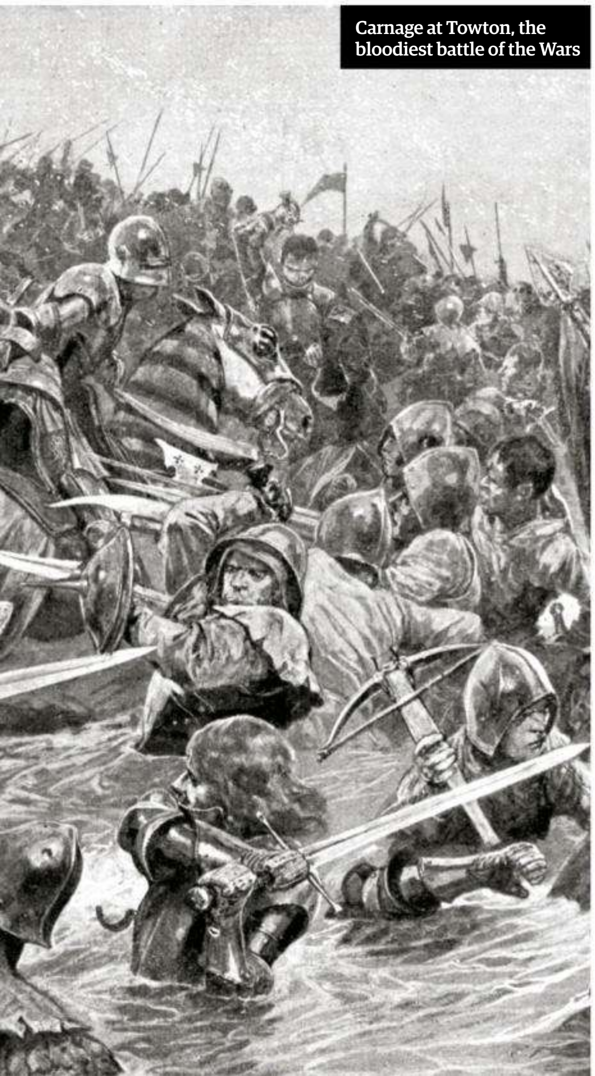
Sword
With a straight double-edged steel blade, a knight's sword could be between 2.5 and 2.8 feet long and weigh between 1.3 and 1.5 kilograms.

Cuisses
These metal plates protected the thighs, and greaves covered the lower parts of the leg and calves.

She in turn liaised in secret with Edward IV's widow to gain support for putting her son on the throne provided he married the former king's daughter, Princess Elizabeth. Further, Lady Margaret contacted her son in Brittany, urging him to raise an invasion force. Henry Tudor did so, sailing in early November 1483, but by then Richard III had crushed the poorly co-ordinated rebellion and the captured Buckingham had been beheaded.

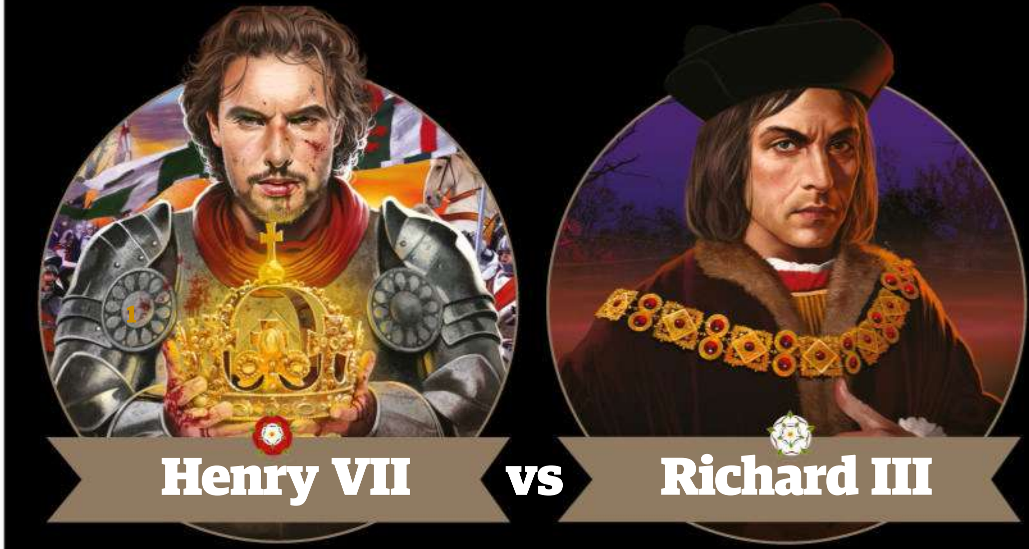
Thomas Lord Stanley convinced the king he had no knowledge of his wife's part in the rebellion. Her life was spared, though she was formally placed in her husband's custody, with her titles and possessions passing into his control. It was an error by Richard III, for by the time of Henry Tudor's second invasion in 1485, the Stanley family had been communicating with him for some time.

From the Pembrokeshire coast, Tudor's force marched through Wales into England. It gained support along the way, from Welsh troops gathered by his uncle Jasper to important disaffected noble families that were perhaps less for him and more anti the usurper king. However, Richard III had strong backing too, from the armies of the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Northumberland and, he'd have thought, Thomas Lord Stanley. Yet if Thomas and his younger brother Sir William were going to stay loyal, the king might have expected their armies to intercept Tudor's march. Instead, they played a waiting game. Summoned by the king to his Nottingham base, Thomas Lord Stanley pleaded


Carnage at Towton, the bloodiest battle of the Wars

Who was the better king?

They shared a battlefield at Bosworth and the crown of England, and despite long and short reigns, they can be compared



Henry VII vs **Richard III**

Battlefield performance

A hardened combat veteran of the Wars of the Roses and in tackling Scottish unrest, Richard's bold but doomed charge at the inexperienced Henry at Bosworth almost carried the day.

●●○○○ ●●●●○

Foreign policy

While Richard tried and failed to negotiate Henry's return from foreign exile, when king, Henry forged strong treaty alliances abroad that avoided costly wars and helped the economy.

●●●●● ●●○○○

Welfare & reforms

Richard was an able administrator with reformist intentions, though he later had to backtrack for financial reasons. Henry was quite conservative, maintaining much of the previous regime's administration methods.

●●●○○ ●●●○○

Public perception

Neither was much loved. Henry, while respected, was equally feared. Disquiet about the fate of the princes and stealing the throne meant Richard was loathed beyond his northern powerbase.

●●○○○ ●○○○○

Dynastic record

Attempting to maintain the Plantagenet line, Richard became its last ruler. In contrast, perhaps owing more to luck than judgement, Henry established the next dynasty.

●●●●● ●○○○○

Richard's wounds

Researchers identified at least 11 injuries on the recently discovered king's skeleton.Some may have been inflicted after death to abuse the body

1. The fatal blows

At the base of the skull, a section of bone has been sliced off by a large, sharp-bladed weapon, like a halberd. There is a second deep penetration hole, perhaps sword created. Either injury would have been fatal.

2. Frontal attack

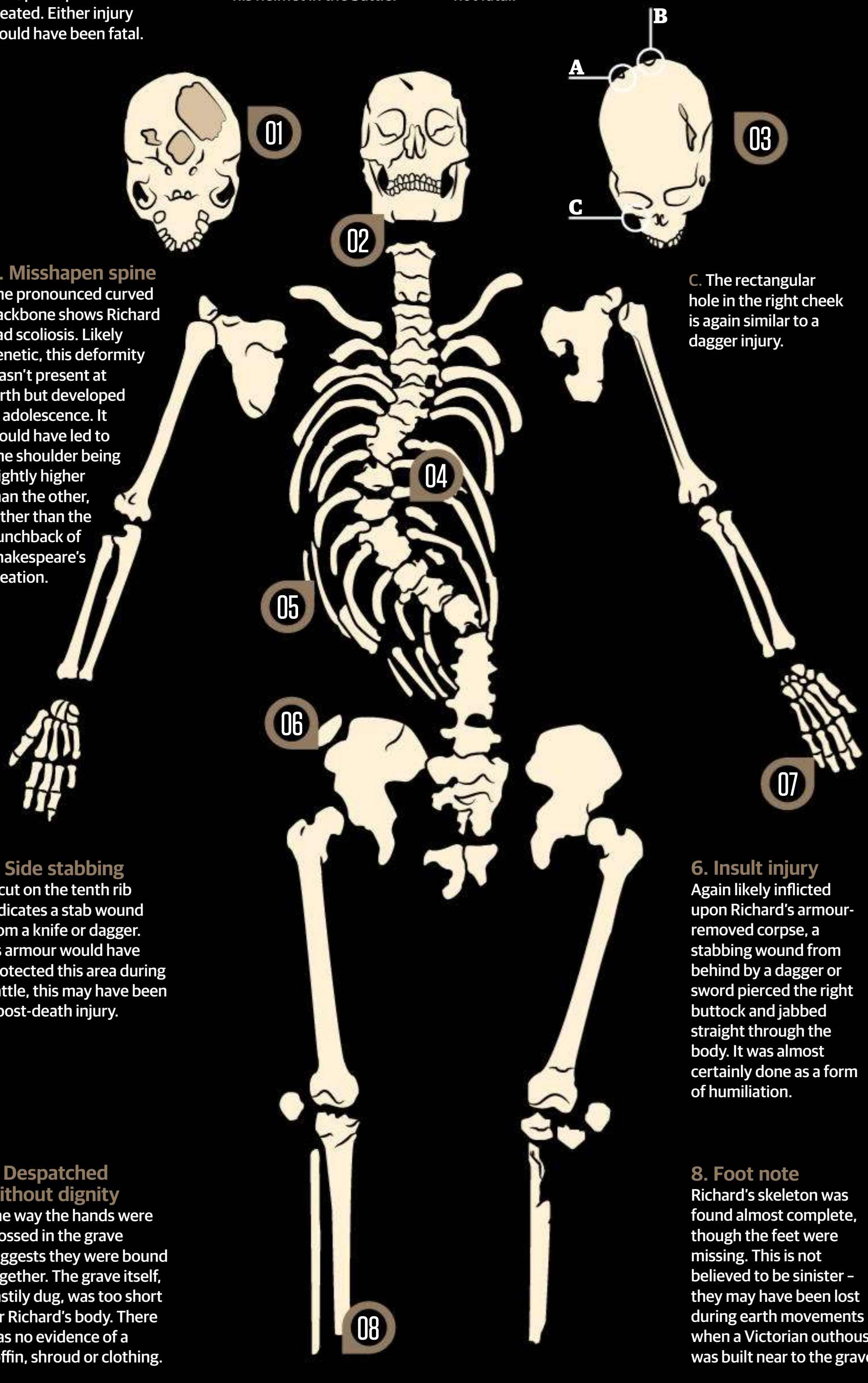
There is a cut mark on the lower jaw, likely a knife injury. This, together with both fatal blows, suggests that Richard had lost his helmet in the battle.

3. Head injuries

A. The top rear of the skull has been clipped several times by a sharp-bladed weapon, such as a sword. Painful blows, though not fatal.

B. A small penetration wound on the skull top, consistent with that of a dagger, was forceful enough to split the bone, pushing small pieces inside.

C. The rectangular hole in the right cheek is again similar to a dagger injury.



4. Misshapen spine

The pronounced curved backbone shows Richard had scoliosis. Likely genetic, this deformity wasn't present at birth but developed in adolescence. It would have led to one shoulder being slightly higher than the other, rather than the hunchback of Shakespeare's creation.

5. Side stabbing

A cut on the tenth rib indicates a stab wound from a knife or dagger. As armour would have protected this area during battle, this may have been a post-death injury.

6. Insult injury

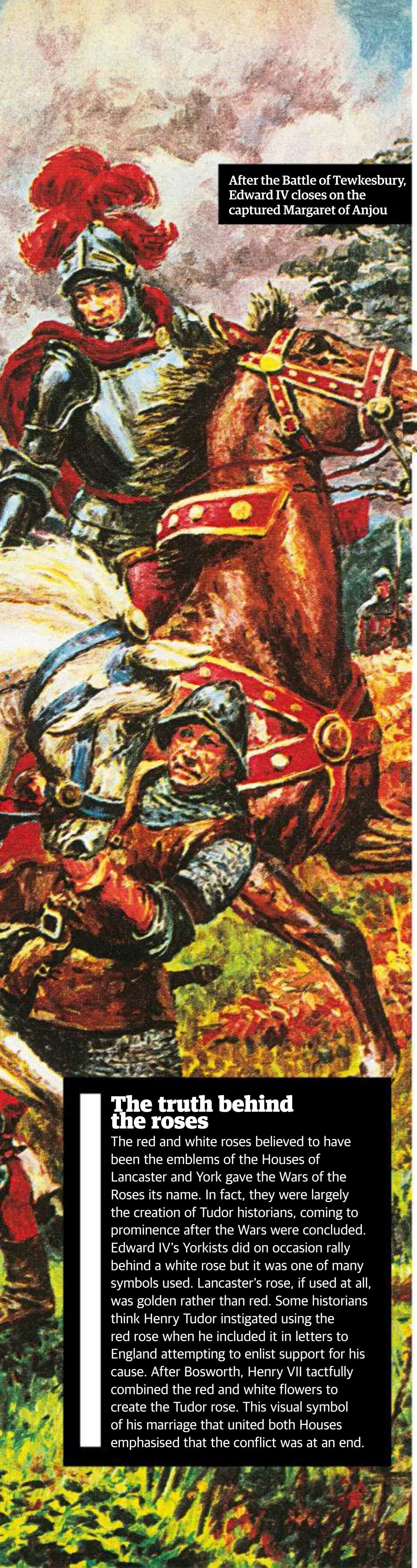
Again likely inflicted upon Richard's armour-removed corpse, a stabbing wound from behind by a dagger or sword pierced the right buttock and jabbed straight through the body. It was almost certainly done as a form of humiliation.

7. Despatched without dignity

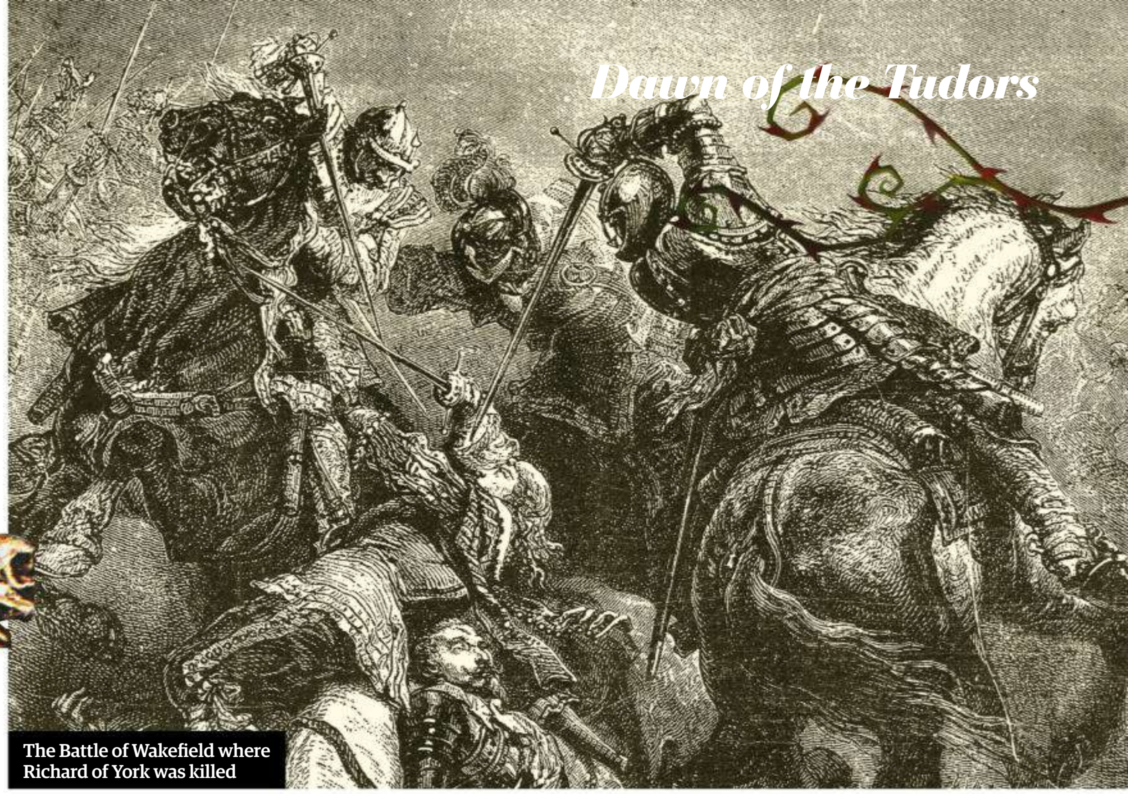
The way the hands were crossed in the grave suggests they were bound together. The grave itself, hastily dug, was too short for Richard's body. There was no evidence of a coffin, shroud or clothing.

8. Foot note

Richard's skeleton was found almost complete, though the feet were missing. This is not believed to be sinister – they may have been lost during earth movements when a Victorian outhouse was built near to the grave.



After the Battle of Tewkesbury, Edward IV closes on the captured Margaret of Anjou



The Battle of Wakefield where Richard of York was killed

illness and remained absent, even though his son, Lord Strange, was with the king's court and effectively a hostage against his father's defection.

The two armies converged in the East Midlands, while the troops of the Stanleys' shadowed both but stayed uncommitted. On the morning of 22 August 1485, the inevitable battle began. A definitive narrative of what happened cannot be agreed as contemporary accounts are sparse. Even the battlefield location, long believed to have been at Ambion Hill near Market Bosworth, is now thought to be a mile away at Fenn Lane Farm. Yet it is likely that Tudor's force, by then some 5,000 strong, had the seasoned field commander the Earl of Oxford in the vanguard, with support on the flanks, and Henry Tudor himself leading a small mounted force to the rear. Facing them were the Duke of Norfolk's men front and centre, with artillery on both flanks, and the king's horsemen in behind. Northumberland's army sat deeper, covering either flank. Richard III had more than twice the men at Tudor's disposal, yet to one side, still uncommitted, were 6,000 Stanley men.

After cannon fire and a rain of arrows, both vanguards slammed into each other. The fighting was brutal and close-quartered, halberd and spike hacking and jabbing against metal-plate armour. The king's superiority of numbers counted for little as Northumberland's men stayed back, never landing a blow. Oxford's men held up well, and Norfolk was killed, but Tudor, seeking support, rode towards the Stanley army. Richard III saw both the movement of Tudor's standard and opportunity. It was risky and bold, but if his mounted knights swooped to engage Tudor's smaller group, his rival could be eliminated and the day won. The king charged ahead.

The impetus carried the king's men deep into Tudor's retinue. The fighting was desperate, the king hacking and slashing to get to his nemesis. Tudor saw his standard-bearer was cut down. Richard III was getting close, close enough for Tudor to see the circlet crown around his helmet, when suddenly the king's flank came under attack. Sir William Stanley, at last acting, betrayed the king by throwing his lot in with Tudor. It turned the tide. The king, some say yelling "treason, treason!", was separated from his men and unseated. He fought on bravely but was enveloped by Welsh foot soldiers. As he was hacked down and killed, legend has it that the circlet flew from his helmet and was retrieved by Thomas Lord Stanley, who placed it on his stepson's head to proclaim him King Henry VII. Their leader dead, many Yorkist soldiers surrendered, bringing the battle to an end after barely two hours. It wasn't quite the last in the Wars of the Roses, but it proved the decisive one.

Given the turbulent history of recent previous monarchs, the fact that the new king's claim to the throne was tenuous and that he had spent more time on the run and in exile than in England, the prospects for Henry VII actually lasting long on the throne were not good. Nevertheless, he set about the task. His swift marriage to Princess Elizabeth, uniting the Houses of Lancaster and York through the Tudor name, helped appease Yorkist hostility. An heir, Arthur, was born less than a year after his official coronation, cementing the new king's reign.

Additionally, while Henry VII was ruthless with the leading players who had supported Richard, he left most of the middle-ranking Yorkists alone. This meant the administration of the country continued smoothly. The new king also benefited from the fact that the country was heartily sick of civil strife. When several pretenders to his position emerged, he was able to snuff out rebellions adroitly because the impostors were unable to gather sufficient support. Importantly, Henry VII built strong alliances with other countries, particularly France and Spain. This negated the need for war-funding taxes, allowing the nation's finances to recover.

In 1509, after almost 24 years on the throne, Henry VII died in his bed. Lady Margaret Beaufort, who saw little of her son when he was young but did plenty to see him to the throne, lay him to rest, outliving him by two months. Although Arthur the heir died young, the 'spare' took the crown as Henry VIII. The Tudor dynasty had begun.

The truth behind the roses

The red and white roses believed to have been the emblems of the Houses of Lancaster and York gave the Wars of the Roses its name. In fact, they were largely the creation of Tudor historians, coming to prominence after the Wars were concluded. Edward IV's Yorkists did on occasion rally behind a white rose but it was one of many symbols used. Lancaster's rose, if used at all, was golden rather than red. Some historians think Henry Tudor instigated using the red rose when he included it in letters to England attempting to enlist support for his cause. After Bosworth, Henry VII tactfully combined the red and white flowers to create the Tudor rose. This visual symbol of his marriage that united both Houses emphasised that the conflict was at an end.

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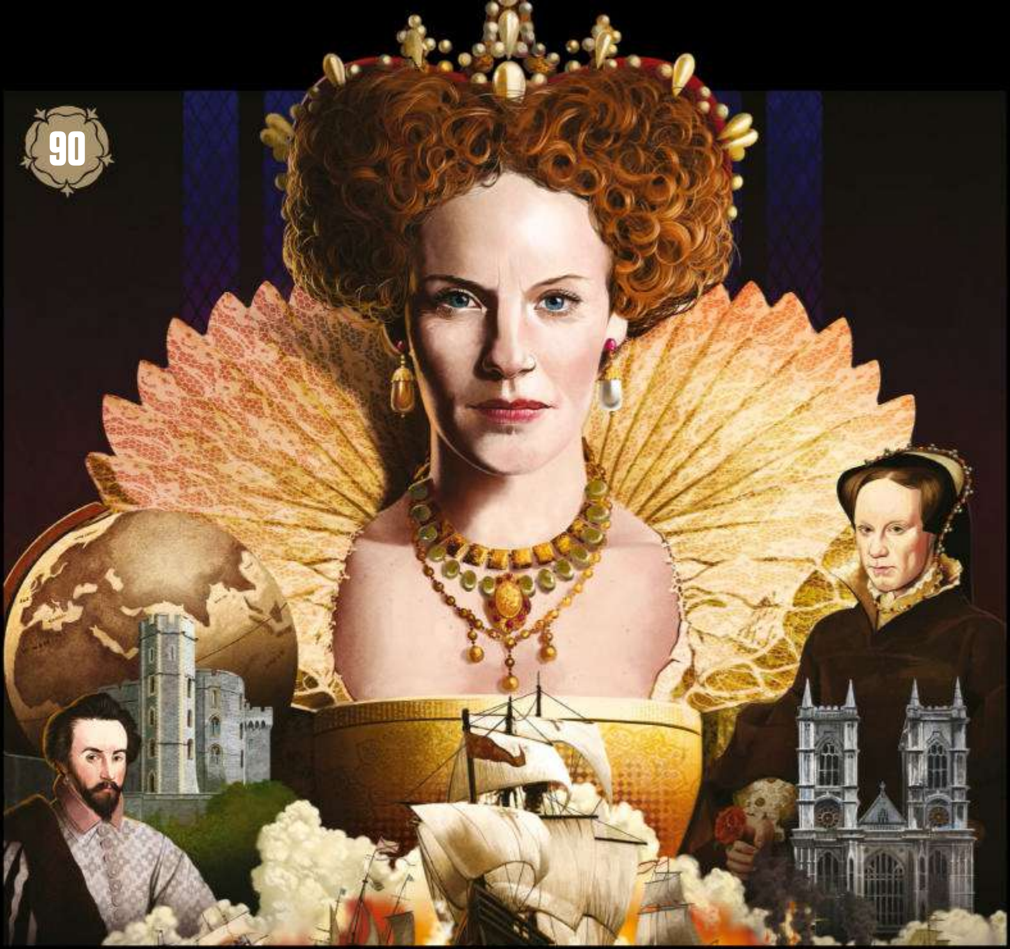
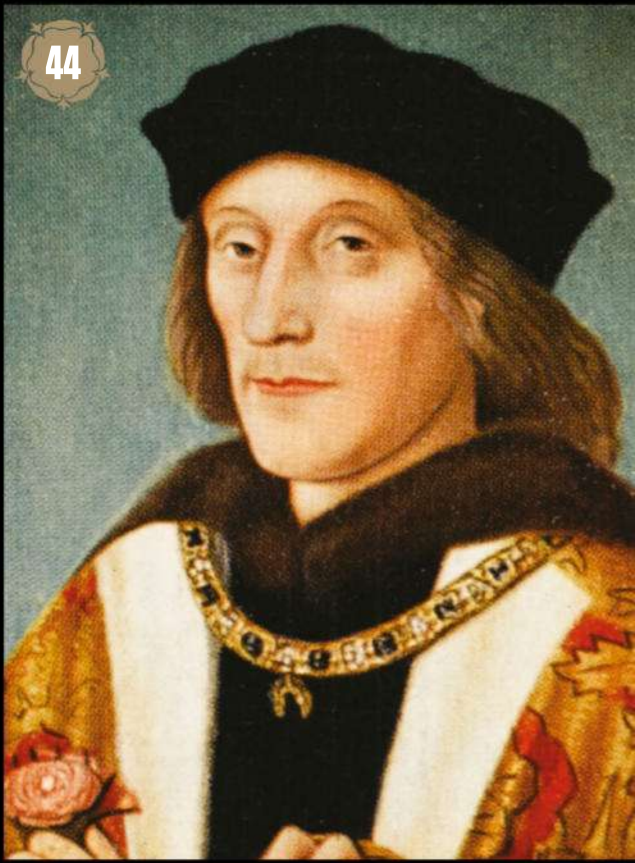




The key figures

Meet the extraordinary people who hold the key to our fascination with the Tudor period

44 Henry VII
How the first Tudor king consolidated his place on the throne after claiming it in battle, and created a dynasty that would occupy the throne for over a century

50 Prince Arthur
Henry's first born son, the boy who would have been king if he had lived long enough

54 Henry VIII
Discover the story of history's most notorious king, his insatiable desire for glory and his campaign for victory in foreign lands

62 Thomas Cromwell
He was Henry VIII's most trusted advisor until he unceremoniously fell from favour, but how did this son of an alehouse keeper rise through the social ranks?

66 The six wives of Henry VIII
The fateful stories of the women who fell foul of Henry's whims and his voracious wish for a son

74 Henry VIII's tower of terror
Who dared to defy the Tudor tyrant? And did they survive the ordeal?

80 Edward VI
Henry's much-loved and long awaited son, a child king whose reign was all too brief

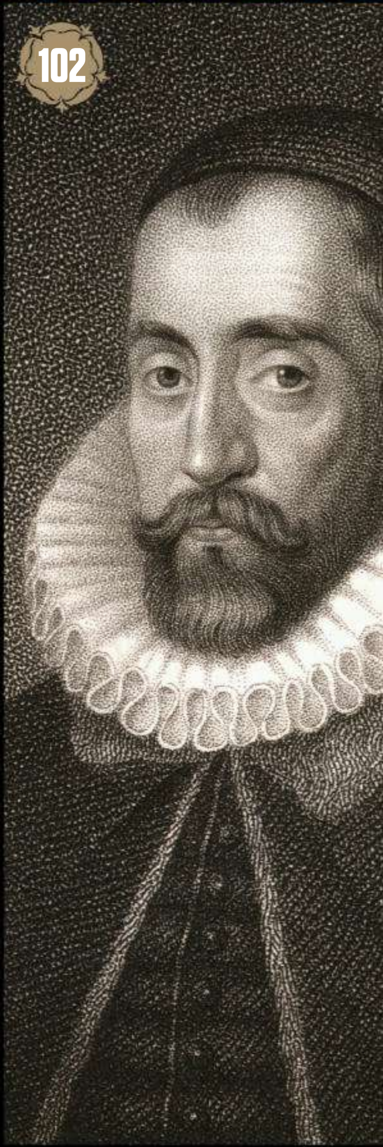
82 Lady Jane Grey
Discover how the 'nine days queen' met a tragic end at the Tower of London

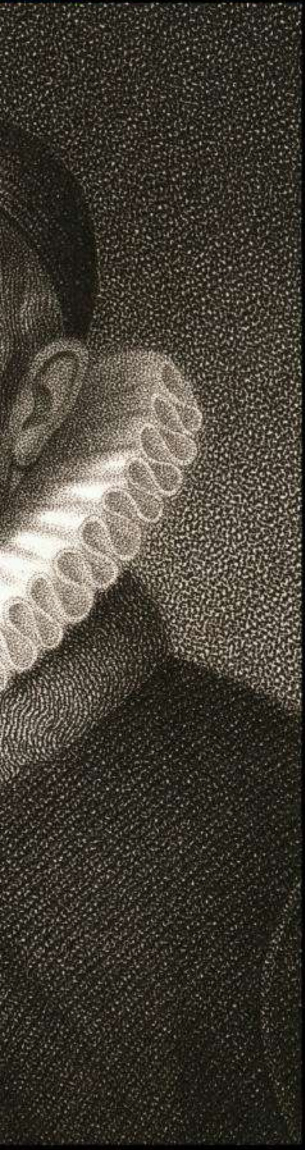
84 Mary I
Find out why we have come to know this fearsome queen as 'Bloody Mary', and how her strong faith shook England

88 Philip II of Spain
Why the presence of Mary's husband, a Spanish prince, upset the populace

90 Elizabeth I
Known for presiding over England's 'golden age', how the virgin queen fought off invasion and rebellion

102 Sir Francis Walsingham
Discover the extreme lengths that Elizabeth's spymaster was willing to go to protect the Virgin Queen from plotters and foreign powers





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1457 – 1509

Henry VII

The king who won his crown through battle and had to fight throughout his reign to keep it, and in doing so established the mighty Tudor dynasty

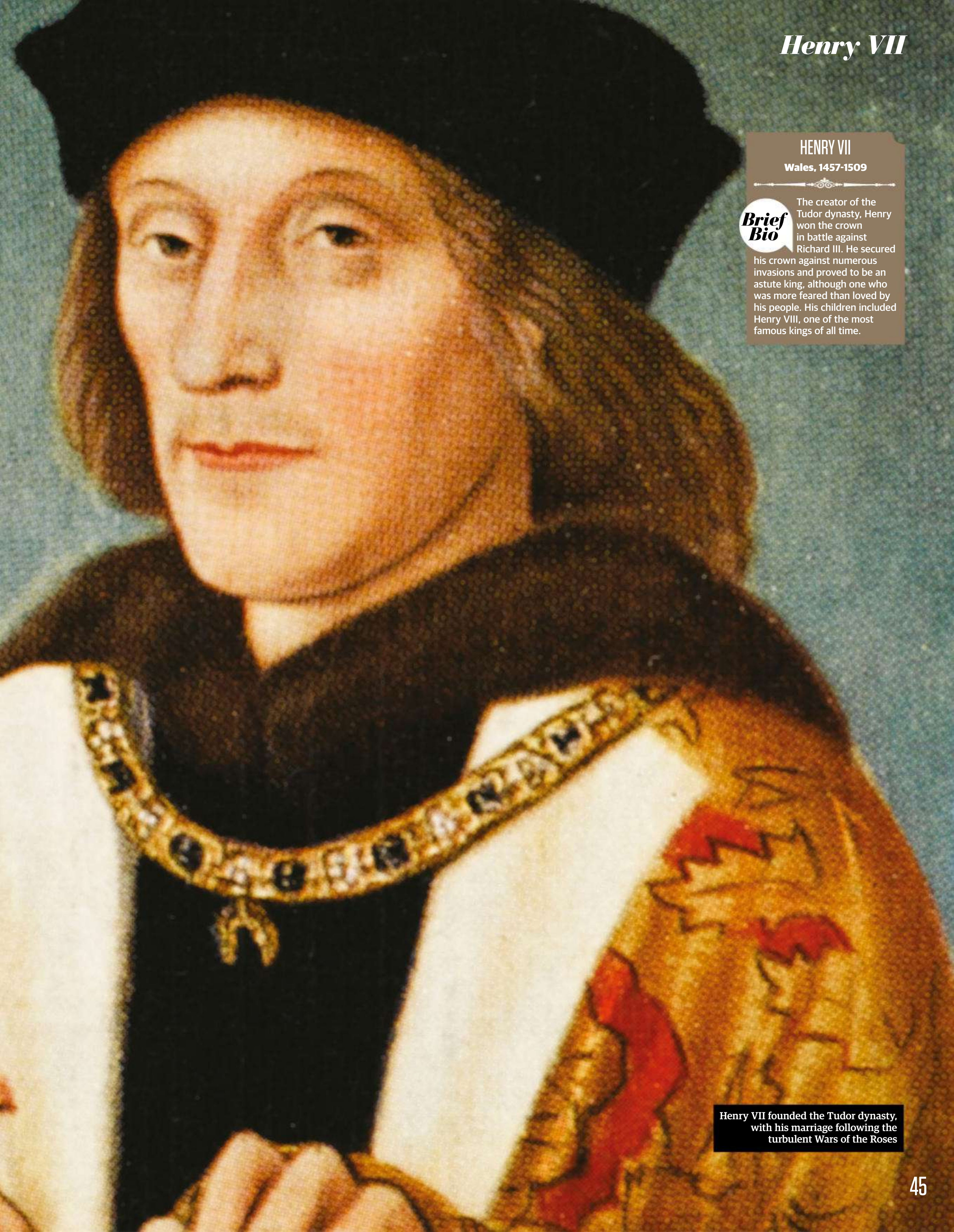
An invasion force set off from France and landed in Wales before heading into the heart of England itself. The year was 1485 and at the head of this ragtag army was a man who, for most of his 28 years on Earth had been on the run, had been constantly looking over his shoulder and unable to find peace. This man was called Henry Tudor and when he first set foot on the wet sand of Wales, he is said to have fallen to his knees and uttered, "Judge me O Lord and favour my cause." It was unsurprising that he was praying, for the odds seemed stacked against him; his claim to the throne was weak and the army of the King of England, Richard III, was much stronger than his own.

Henry and Elizabeth had eight children, but only four survived through to adulthood

There were two reasons why the force landed in Wales – Henry wanted to remain undetected for as long as possible to give him time to build up support and it was also the land where he had been born in 1457, at Pembroke Castle. The man who would go on to found the Tudor dynasty was born to an earl and a countess and had a minor claim to the throne through his mother, Lady Margaret of Beaufort, a descendant of Edward III. Despite this tenuous royal lineage, by the early 1470s he was the main Lancastrian claimant remaining, as the Wars of the Roses – a battle for the crown between the houses of Lancaster and York that began in 1455 and saw the fortunes of the two rival houses ebb and flow – had resulted in the deaths of the rest.

When the course of the Wars of Roses changed again in 1471 with the reclaiming of the throne by the Yorkist king Edward IV, Henry fled to Brittany for safety. He would not set foot in England again for 14 years and this life of constantly being under threat, of never feeling safe, would affect how he ruled when he became King of England. In Brittany (a duchy independent of both France and England) Henry was under the protection of Francis II, who resisted Edward's attempts to send Henry to England and in the process probably saved his life. It was Edward himself who died unexpectedly in 1483 and Richard of Gloucester, who would become Richard III, took control and imprisoned Edward's two sons in the Tower of London. To this day, debate still rages about what exactly happened to them, but there was no doubt that Richard was now in control of England.

Richard was now king, but many were unhappy that Edward's sons wouldn't get the chance to succeed their father. This increasing political division in England meant that, after years in the wilderness, Henry was thrust back into the political spotlight with many believing he should assert his claim to the throne. This situation was managed with what would become typical political cunning by Henry, who announced that if he did return and become king then he would marry Elizabeth of York and thus unite the two warring houses. When he learned that Richard was exerting pressure on Francis to release his rival to him, Henry escaped to France dressed as a servant. It was in Paris that his supporters gathered around him and made their plans for an invasion of England and to put to an end to the Yorkist king who had only been sitting on the throne for two years. On 7 August 1485 Henry landed at Milton Haven Waterway in



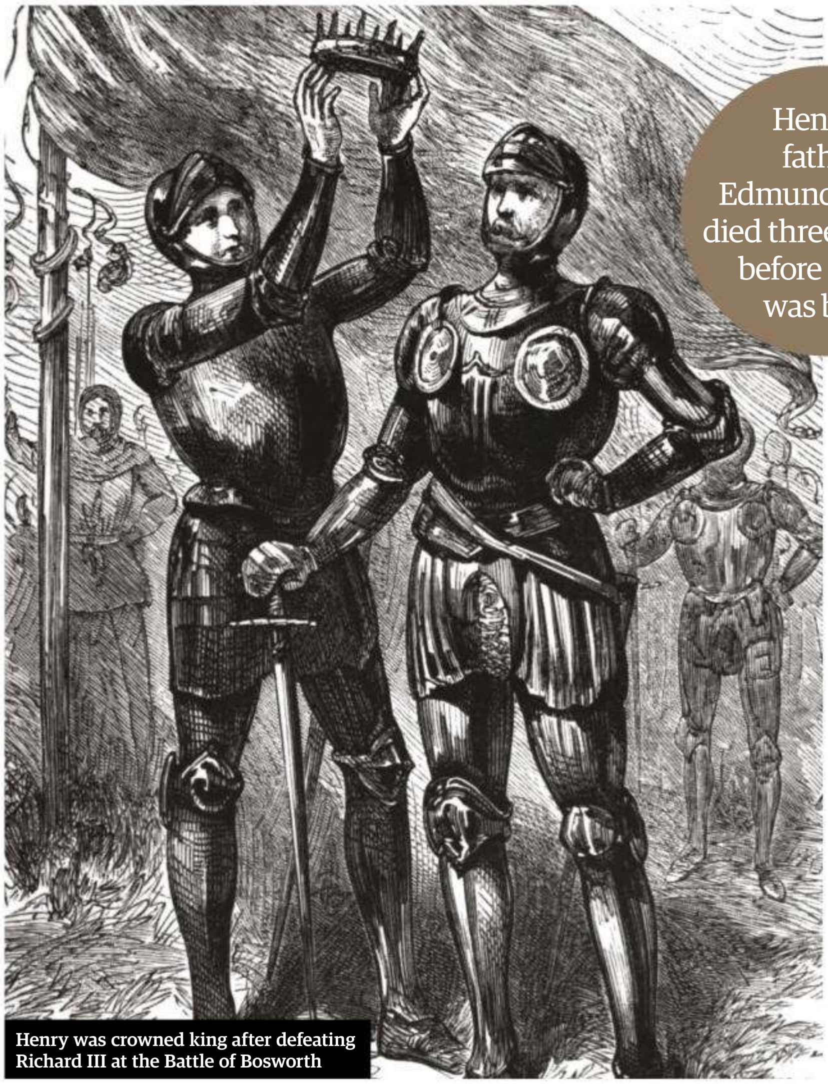
HENRY VII

Wales, 1457-1509

Brief Bio

The creator of the Tudor dynasty, Henry won the crown in battle against Richard III. He secured his crown against numerous invasions and proved to be an astute king, although one who was more feared than loved by his people. His children included Henry VIII, one of the most famous kings of all time.

Henry VII founded the Tudor dynasty, with his marriage following the turbulent Wars of the Roses



Henry was crowned king after defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth

Henry's father, Edmund Tudor, died three months before Henry was born

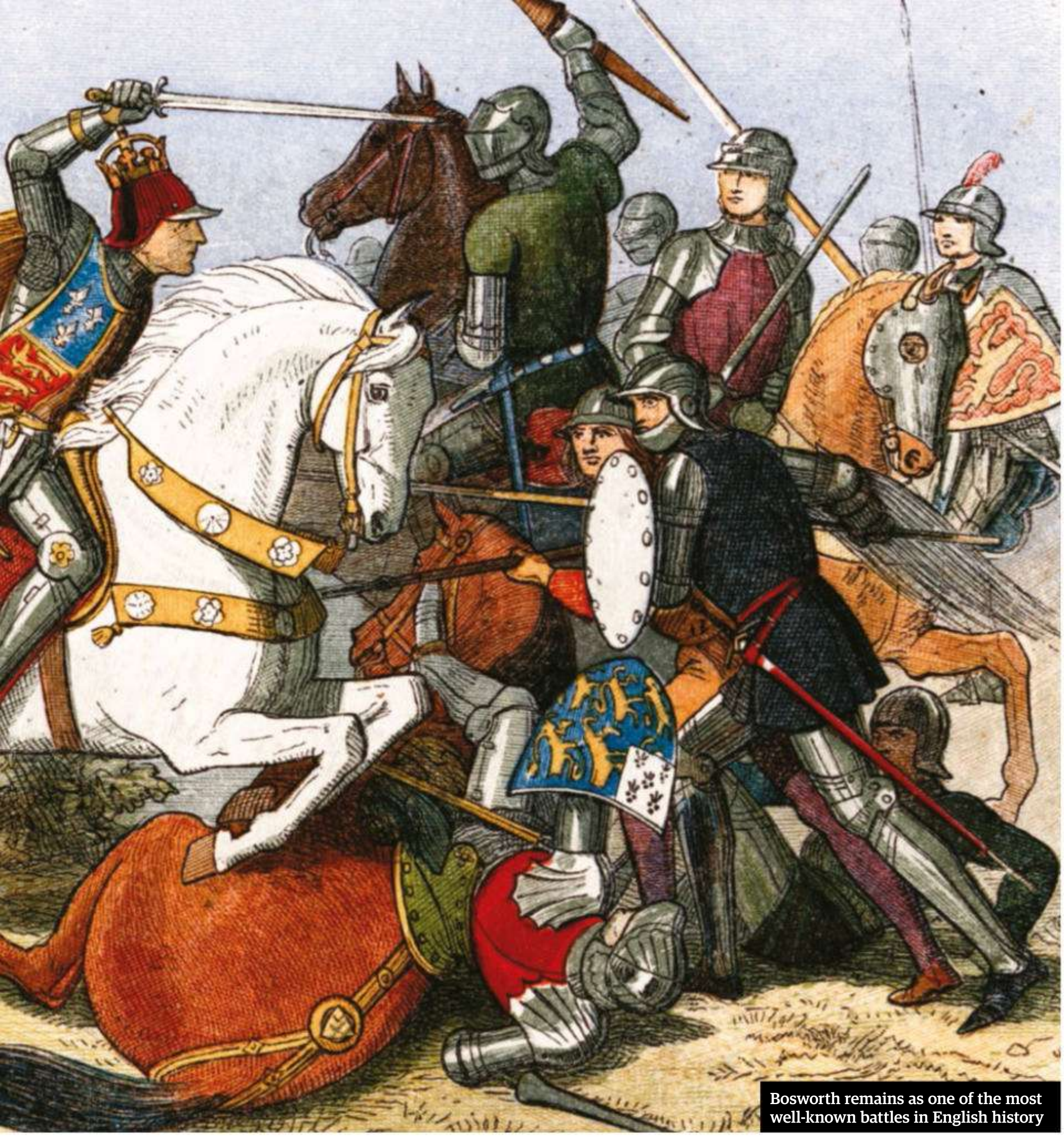
"Henry's forces were in danger of being overwhelmed when William Stanley threw his men into battle and instructed them to attack Richard"

Wales and said his prayer to God while kneeling on the wet sand of the beach.

Henry's invasion force didn't stay secret for long and soon Richard's larger army was in pursuit and eventually intercepted Henry's forces south of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire. On 22 August what would turn out to be the last confrontation of the Wars of the Roses took place as the two rivals met each other on the battlefield. Henry's forces were in danger of being overwhelmed when William Stanley, who had been watching from the sidelines, threw his men into battle and instructed them to attack Richard. This action by one of the most powerful men in the land was the decisive moment in the battle and the King of England was cut down, murdered by common men, battered to death and then stripped naked and taken to Leicester, where his dead body was exposed to the public glare. Against all odds, the man who had been living in exile for most of his life had won. The crown was his, but Henry knew that if he had won it in battle then he could also lose it in battle. The struggle to keep hold of his crown and establish a legacy had only just begun.

All the years that Henry had spent in exile had robbed him of an intimate knowledge of the workings of a royal court, but had made him a sharp observer and his keen mind immediately grasped how important appearances were; it was not enough to just be king - he had to look, act and sound like a king. It is often said that history is written by the victors and following his coronation on 30 October, that is exactly what Henry did. He used his first parliament to change the date that he became king to a day before the Battle of Bosworth, thereby making Richard the attempted usurper and ensuring that everyone who had opposed Henry could in the future be tried with treason. His marriage to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, united the warring houses of the white rose of York and the red of Lancaster and led to the creation of a powerful symbol: the Tudor rose, which incorporated the two colours. He also commissioned the first ever pound coin, a gold sovereign with an image of Henry sitting on a throne in all his splendour on the obverse and a Tudor double rose on the reverse.

While these symbols were powerful propaganda tools, important in trying to legitimise the new Tudor rule, they were nothing compared to the importance of producing a male heir. So when, in 1486, Prince Arthur was born to Henry and Elizabeth, the new king could breathe a little easier. While the nation rejoiced at the birth of the prince, who had been named after the mythical King of Camelot, there were still those who weren't buying into Henry's image of the legitimacy of the Tudors. In 1487 a rebellion began in Ireland around a boy called Lambert Simnel who claimed to be the Yorkist Earl of Warwick, son of Edward IV's brother George, Duke of Clarence. The force invaded England but was no match for Henry's battle-



Bosworth remains as one of the most well-known battles in English history

hardened troops, who decimated the rival army at the Battle of Stoke. Simnel, who was merely a puppet in the plan, was pardoned by Henry. However, the fact that Henry had been forced into battle to keep his crown was a further indication that his place on the throne was not secure.

Just four years later, history repeated itself and Henry had to deal with another rebellion; this time a young man called Perkin Warbeck claimed to be one of the Princes in the Tower whom it was thought Richard had killed. This was a serious problem for Henry as he knew that much of his support had only come because of the disappearance of the two princes – while Warbeck's claim was widely discredited, it would provide a good excuse for people to rise up against him. Henry responded by setting up an extensive surveillance network, with spies across the country and the continent keeping a close eye on anyone who seemed likely to cause trouble.

Henry had always been a suspicious, even paranoid king, and with Warbeck's claim this only increased. The spying network was increasingly well funded and Henry's Privy Chamber, his personal space where he worked and slept, became harder to gain admittance to as the number of people whom he trusted decreased. The king became obsessed with two things: money and security. His style of government became increasingly personal, with his signature required for all substantial financial transactions. For Henry, money meant control.

When in 1497, Warbeck – who had been a constant thorn in Henry's side – was captured, and executed two years later, it was a vindication of the king's refusal to loosen his grip on government. However, with Warbeck killed and the king having been on the throne for more than a decade, he could begin to focus more attention on matters outside of the island nation and look to further legitimise his dynasty. Marriage alliances were a formidable diplomatic tool and Henry had given customary care and attention to whom Arthur would marry.

By his death he had amassed a fortune that in today's money would be worth approximately £950 million

Columbus's 'discovery' of the New World would change the face of European politics

Landmarks of Henry's lifetime

Old enemies

France and England had a long history of conflict before Henry became king, such as the Hundred Years' War of 1337-1453. As Henry was first and foremost interested in securing his throne, he mostly pursued a strategy of peace with France but did launch a small invasion in 1492 which led to the Treaty of Étaples, the terms of which helped to swell Henry's coffers.

Power of the nobles

In England many noble families were very powerful and possessed land and armies that could potentially challenge the king. Henry used two main tools to limit their power: taxation and the Court of the Star Chamber. The court operated unusually quickly for the time and would act against those so powerful that ordinary courts wouldn't convict them. However, as its actions were carried out in secret, it could be used tyrannically by rulers.

The New World

In 1492 Genoan explorer Christopher Columbus (backed by Spanish money) landed in the New World, an action that would change the world forever. The discovery of a path from Europe to this new area would lead to many of the major European nations trying to colonise it and saw a raft of gold and exotic goods flood into the continent.

Money, money, money

Years of war with France had led to England being in severe debt and Henry worked hard to build up his own personal finances and that of the nation. He was personally involved in this aspect of government and his trade agreements and policies were designed to boost finances. By the end of his reign, tax revenues were significantly higher and Henry VIII inherited a far richer monarchy than many who had gone before him.

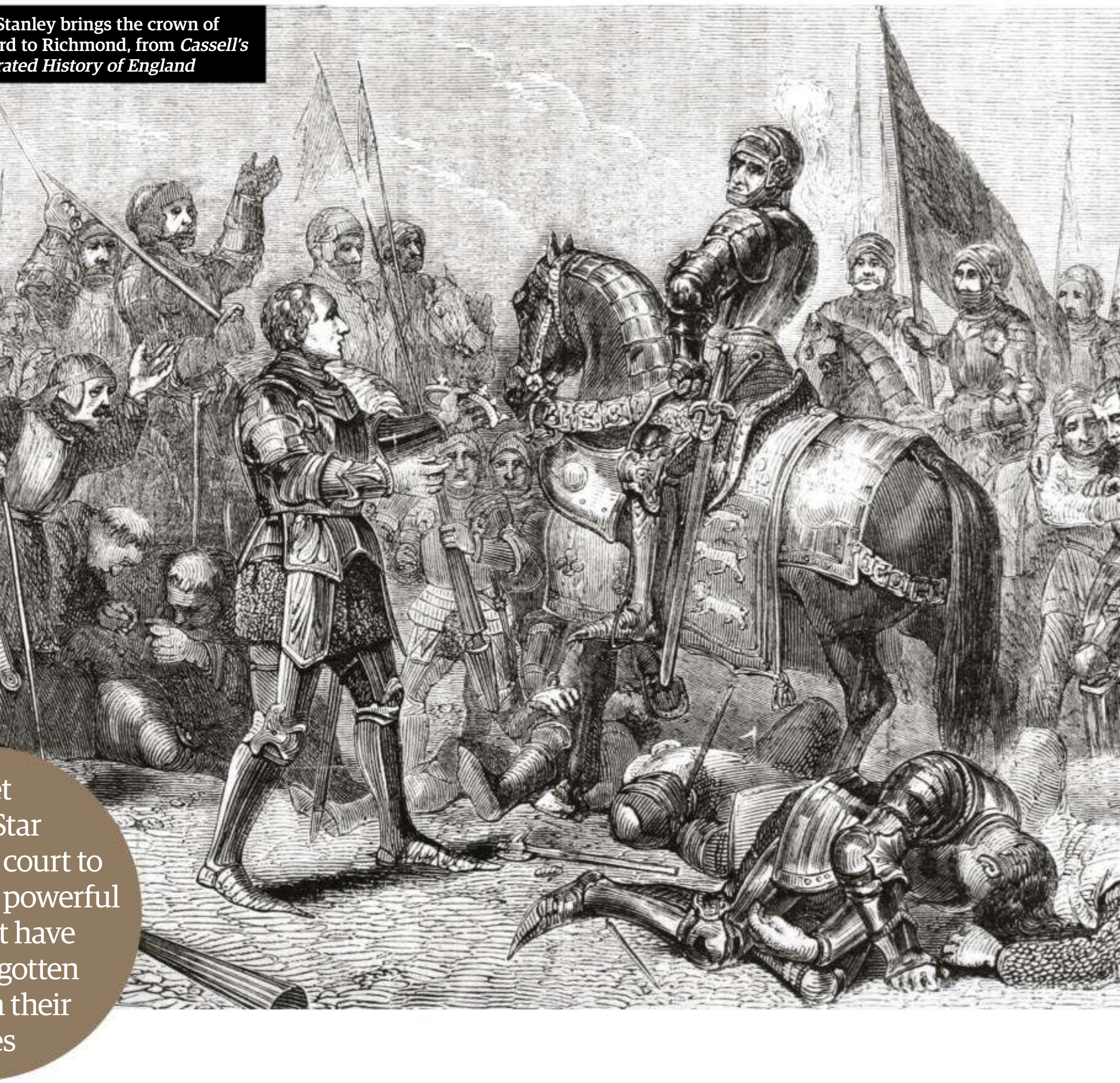
A new world power

The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469 began the process of uniting Spain as one country (although Aragon and Castile remained independent from each other in some ways) and increased its power. Spain would emerge as a powerful player on the world and international stage and a country that England had to be increasingly wary of.

The Tudor spy network

John Morton was someone whose political support was fluid, to say the least; originally a Lancastrian supporter, he changed sides to the Yorkists before allying himself with Henry after his victory at the Battle of Bosworth. While Morton's loyalty could be called into question, his skills and talent could not. Henry needed capable men and appointed him to the prestigious position of Archbishop of Canterbury. Morton was then effectively given carte blanche to set up a spy and surveillance network which would report directly to the king and the king alone.

Henry had spies throughout Europe and also at home and these agents of the king were instructed to keep a close eye on those who might pose a threat. This spy network was especially helpful to the first Tudor king in the case of Perkin Warbeck, as it meant that Henry knew of the pretender's whereabouts and who his supporters were, and so could act accordingly. Indeed, it was through this network that he learned that William Stanley – whose army had effectively won him the crown at Bosworth – was plotting with traitors and so he was executed and his vast estates went to the king. Henry's spy network played a key role in enabling him to stay on the throne.


Lord Stanley brings the crown of Richard to Richmond, from *Cassell's Illustrated History of England*

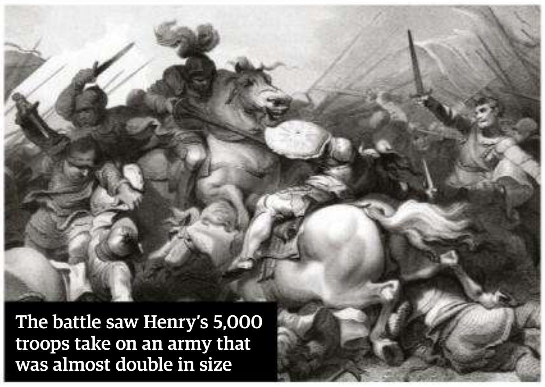
He set up the Star Chamber – a court to prosecute the powerful who might have otherwise gotten away with their crimes

+ HENRIC' VII DI GRA REX AGL Z FR

A coin produced during Henry's reign - the king had a well-known love of money

Defining moment
Invasion of England
1485

Henry and a small invasion force, made up mostly of foreign mercenaries and exiled Englishmen, land in Wales and try to muster support. Henry's army eventually numbers around 5,000, but Richard III soon learns of its presence and Henry is forced to fight at Bosworth Field on 22 August. Richard's army gradually begins to grind down the opposition. However, when nobleman William Stanley instructs his forces to attack Richard, the tide of the battle turns. Henry is crowned king on the bloody battlefield and makes his way from Bosworth to the capital and his new throne.


The battle saw Henry's 5,000 troops take on an army that was almost double in size

Timeline

1457

- **Henry is born**
The future king is born in Pembroke Castle to Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort. The only drops of royal blood in his veins are through his mother's side.
1457

- **Edward IV becomes king**
When the Yorkist Edward regains the throne, Henry flees to Brittany, where he will stay for the best part of 14 years.
1471

- **Princes in the Tower**
When Edward dies, Richard places his two sons in the Tower – they are never seen again. Richard is crowned king but his actions mean that many don't support him.
1483

- **Uniting two houses**
Henry marries Elizabeth of York on 18 January 1486. This action unites the two warring houses of York and Lancaster.
1486

ELIZABETHA VXOR HENRICI VII

- **Revolt**
A group of Yorkists crown Lambert Simnel as Edward VI and land in England. Henry's army defeats them in battle in Stoke and so he keeps his crown.
1487

“Henry, who normally had a strong poker-face, could not contain his grief and shut himself away for six weeks. He was mentally and physically exhausted”

He favoured a union with a Spanish princess, thereby uniting two enemies of France, and as far back as 1489 (when Arthur was just three) the treaty of Medina del Campo had betrothed him to Catherine, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. By the time of Warbeck’s death, Arthur was nearing the age when he could marry and so preparations for the lavish wedding could begin.

On 14 November 1501 the two were married by the Archbishop of Canterbury in St Paul’s Cathedral. This was a momentous occasion for Henry; the wedding legitimised his rule, as it meant a foreign power such as Spain saw him as the true king and ensured that his dynasty would continue long after his death. The lavish two-week wedding celebrations turned London into a party city and all commented on how beautiful Catherine looked. Henry’s joy would be short-lived, though, as mere months later Arthur contracted an illness and died, something that caused an immense political impact. Worse would come for Henry when in 1503 Elizabeth died nine days after childbirth, with the baby also not surviving. Many had supported Henry out of loyalty to Elizabeth and with her joining Arthur in the grave it seemed that the king’s crown, which he had worked tirelessly to secure, was slipping through his fingers like grains of sand.

Henry, who normally had a strong poker-face, could not contain his grief and shut himself away for six weeks. He was mentally and physically exhausted, but when he returned to normal government life he was even more ruthless than before. He saw conspiracy theories everywhere and decided that if his subjects would not love him then they would fear him. He used a series of large financial bonds on leading citizens and merchants to ensure their good behaviour – for many the cost of betraying the king became financially impossible – as well as the Council Learned in the Law, possibly the most notorious expression of his rule. This council had unprecedented powers and was answerable only to the king. It could overrule normal legal proceedings to look at any cases it wished and was not above extorting money, either as a punishment or simply to swell the king’s coffers. From 1503 the council was run efficiently and ruthlessly by Edmund Dudley, who later wrote that the king wanted, “Many persons in danger at his pleasure… bound to his grace for great sums of money.”

Genuine fear and unease swept the country at this repressive regime, but Henry’s dynasty was further secured thanks to a stroke of outrageous good fortune: in 1506 a ship carrying Philip the Fair of Burgundy was shipwrecked in England. Henry ensured Philip had everything he wanted at the royal court, but through this thin veneer it was clear that Philip was effectively a prisoner until he agreed to release to Henry’s care the Duke of Suffolk, who had been agitating on the continent for a rebellion in England. Philip agreed and when the boat containing Suffolk arrived, he was promptly escorted to the Tower of London.

In his last few years, Henry became increasingly ill and withdrew from public life. All eyes turned to his prince and heir Henry, who seemed to be very different from his father – where the king was cold and calculating, the young prince was a fine physical specimen interested in honour and chivalry. After the paranoid regime of his father, the people were looking forward to a more traditional king, but if it hadn’t been for Henry VII’s shrewd actions, there would have been no crown to pass down. When in 1509 the light in Henry was fading fast, he could reflect on a job well done: a man who had spent much of his early life on the run had won the English crown and been able to hold onto it. His people may have celebrated the passing of the penny-pinching king, but the fact that there was no opposition towards his son becoming monarch was probably his greatest achievement and one that was won through cunning, hard work, greed, ruthlessness and ambition.

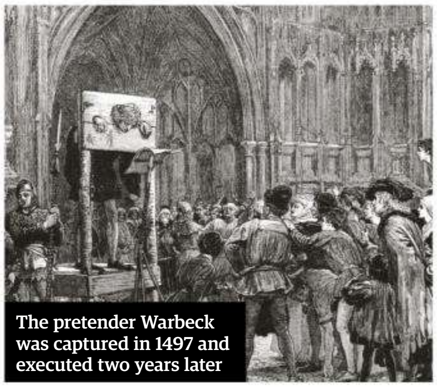
The marriage of his daughter Margaret to James IV of Scotland meant their descendants would have a claim to both thrones

Defining moment

Defeat of Warbeck

1497

Perkin Warbeck is a pretender to the English throne who claims to be Richard Duke of York, one of the Princes in the Tower. He first stakes his claim in 1490 in Burgundy and gains support from those who oppose Henry’s rule. In 1491 he and a small force land in Ireland but receive little support and return to Europe. In 1495 he lands in Kent, but is soon forced to flee to Scotland. He is welcomed by James IV, but their attempted English invasion of 1496 soon fails. Captured after landing in Cornwall in 1497, Warbeck is eventually executed in 1499.



The pretender Warbeck was captured in 1497 and executed two years later

Defining moment

The king is dead, long live the king

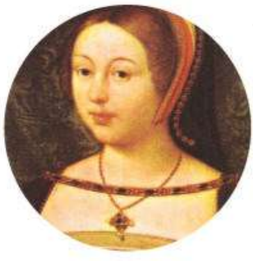
1509

On 21 April, Henry, who has been suffering from an unidentified illness (now thought to be tuberculosis), dies at Richmond Palace and is buried in Westminster Abbey next to his wife Elizabeth. Henry leaves behind a prosperous country with money in the coffers and a number of successful peace and trade agreements. It is believed that on one of the last nights of his life he calls his son Henry to him and instructs him to keep the alliance with Spain strong by marrying Catherine of Aragon, the widow of Arthur. The mere fact that his son Henry enjoys such a peaceful accession to the throne, with no hint or rebellion or other candidates, illustrates what a good job his father has done to establish the Tudors as kings and queens of England.

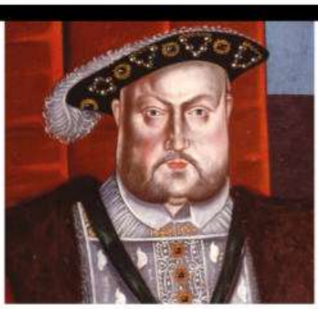
Namesake born
Elizabeth gives birth to their second son on 28 June. He will go on to become Henry VIII, one of the most famous British monarchs of all time.
1491

Intercursus Magnus
This trade treaty with the Netherlands, a key market for the export of British wool, is seen as one of Henry’s most important achievements.
1496

Death of a prince
Arthur, Henry’s first-born, dies just six months after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He is just 16 years old.
1502



Scottish union
Henry marries his daughter Margaret off to the Scottish king James IV. This is an attempt to end the fighting between the two nations and the marriage is part of an agreement called ‘The treaty of Perpetual Peace.’
1503



1509

1486 – 1502

Prince Arthur

The tragic story of Henry Tudor's first-born son, the boy who would have been king

The first-born son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Arthur was next in line to become king of England. His father was Lancastrian and his mother from the house of York, meaning the royal baby united the opposing factions in the Wars of the Roses. The prince was born just over a year after the Battle of Bosworth, at St Swithun's Priory in Winchester, and baptised in the great Norman cathedral there.

Henry was obsessed with the tale of King Arthur and prior to the birth, he assigned genealogists to trace his origins to the ancient Welsh king Cadwallader, and he believed Winchester was built on the ruins of Camelot. As a result, Arthur's name was chosen to evoke memories of the legendary King of England whose round table was located in the city, once the capital of the kingdom of Wessex. Henry also valued strong ties with Wales and made Arthur the head of the supervisory jurisdiction over the region that was advised and primarily run by Jasper Tudor, Earl of Bedford.

Although now the undisputed ruler of the country, Henry Tudor was burdened with rebellions against the crown, so he desired a strong line of potential heirs. The young Arthur was assigned the Earls of Oxford and Derby as his godfathers, and the latter's wife presented baby Arthur with a rose that had a grafting of white and red upon it, symbolising the joining of the Houses of York and Lancaster, which had happened upon Henry's marriage. Arthur would go on to have eight younger siblings, including a certain younger brother called Henry.

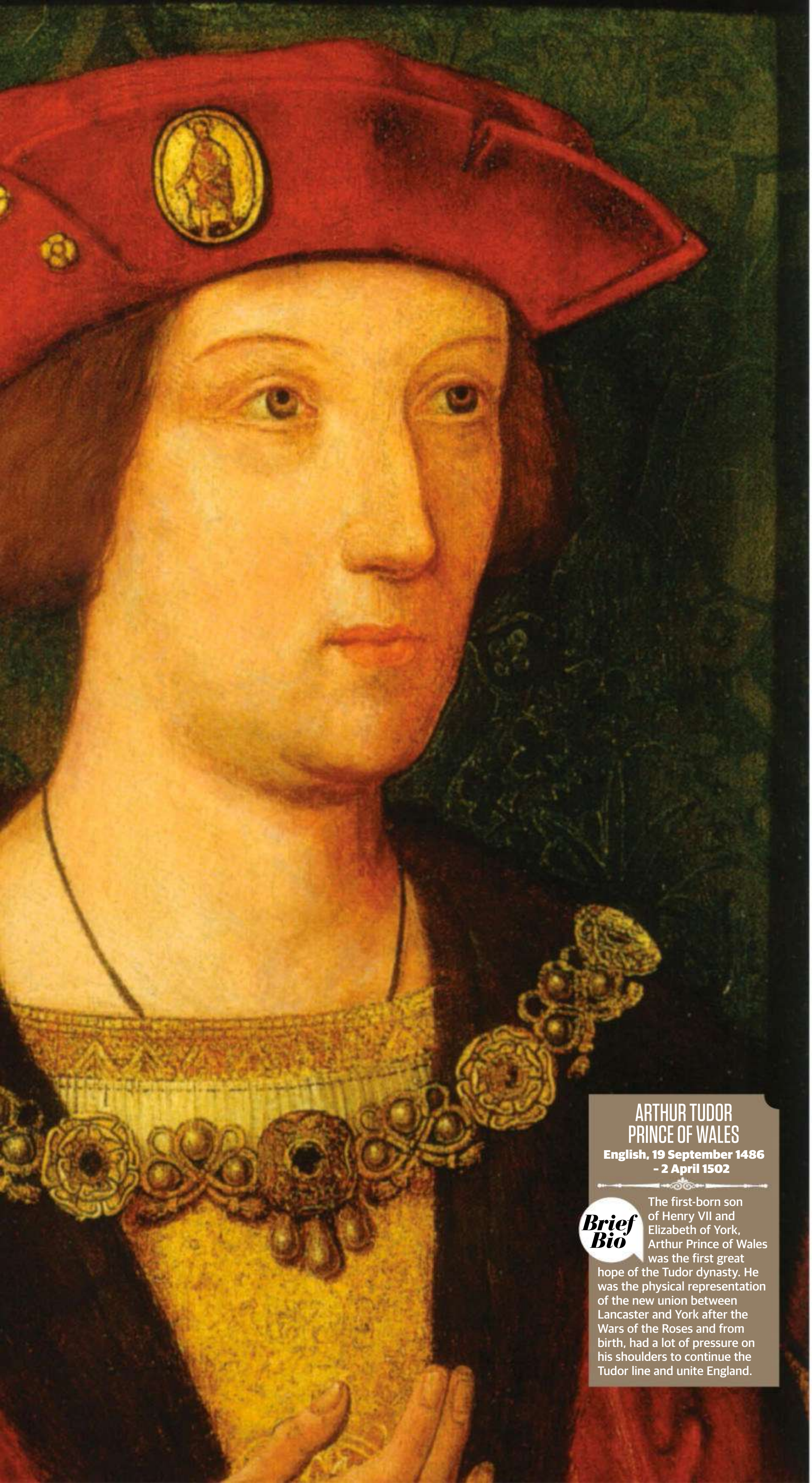
At the age of three, Arthur was appointed the first ever Prince of Wales and also the Earl of Chester. Two years later he would become a Knight of the Garter, in addition to his title as a Knight of the Bath that he had held since childhood. As he grew up, the young prince was taught by a selection of personal tutors such as John Rede, the blind poet Bernard André and Thomas Linacre. The teachings of André in particular helped Arthur learn both Greek and Latin, and he was introduced to all the classic authors from antiquity.

Despite his later problems, Arthur is reported as having no significant health issues in his early life. An intelligent prince, he was quiet and somewhat frail, so was nowhere near the athlete that his younger brother Henry was, although he did show some skill in archery. Arthur's father was a big influence and ensured that his son's teachings included music and poetry as well as classics and languages.

Eager to improve relations with Spain, the treaty of Medina del Campo was signed in 1488. Both nations were concerned by the power of France, so an alliance was sought to combat the potential threat. This was not the first time the Spanish monarchy had tried to forge favourable alliances with other nations, and their eagerness to seal a deal with England was partially motivated by their involvement in the Italian Wars.

> The prince's lost grave was located using a ground-probing radar system that found evidence of previously in-filled soil

One of the clauses in the treaty was for Arthur to marry Catalina de Aragon, or Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. This wasn't the first time

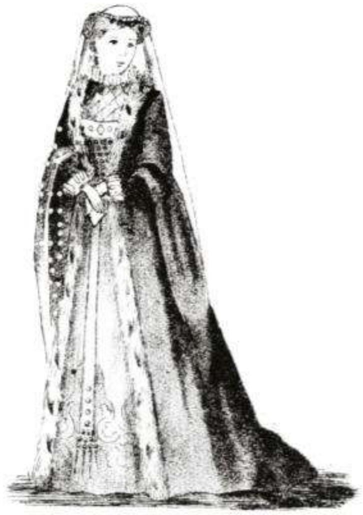


ARTHUR TUDOR PRINCE OF WALES

English, 19 September 1486 – 2 April 1502

Brief Bio

The first-born son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Arthur Prince of Wales was the first great hope of the Tudor dynasty. He was the physical representation of the new union between Lancaster and York after the Wars of the Roses and from birth, had a lot of pressure on his shoulders to continue the Tudor line and unite England.



Proclaimed as queen by her supporters, Lady Jane Grey was deposed by Mary I

The nearly-monarchs

Harald Hadrada

The death of Edward the Confessor in 1066 caused a scramble for the throne between Vikings, Saxons and Normans. Believing he was promised kingship, Harald marched on England but was defeated at Stamford Bridge by Harold Godwinson and his Saxon army. We all know what happened at Hastings shortly after.

Ælfweard of Wessex

Not much is known about Ælfweard apart from his disputed claim to the throne of Wessex. Sandwiched in between the (relatively) long reigns of Edward the Elder and Æthelstan (c.924 CE), it is believed that Ælfweard ruled for a matter of weeks and wasn't even officially crowned.

CB Fry

A true maverick, CB Fry proudly represented England in football, cricket and athletics. He was also a gifted scholar and a politician. What he is most famous for, though, is being asked to become King of Albania in 1920, which he politely declined.

Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich of Russia

One man who came off particularly badly in the Russian Revolution of 1917 was Michael Alexandrovich. A veteran from the First World War, the duke was in line to become the new head of the Russian monarchy after the abdication of his brother, Nicholas II. However, his chance to be tsar was scuppered after the Communists took power.

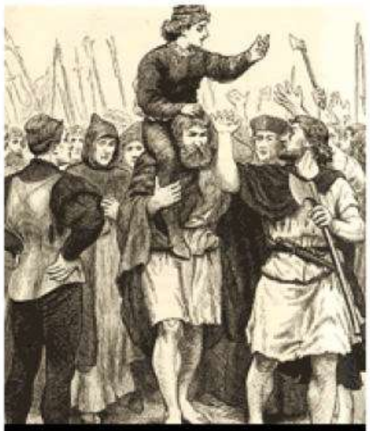
Lady Jane Grey

Keen for the Tudor monarchy to stay protestant, the dying Edward VI named Lady Jane Grey as his successor. An intelligent and savvy woman, Jane was proclaimed queen for a grand total of nine days in 1553 before the Catholic Mary I finally got her way and ousted her. For her part, Jane was duly imprisoned and beheaded.

Tudor rebellions

Although the War of the Roses had ground to a halt at the decisive Battle of Bosworth Field, disdain for the new monarchy was still rife in England. The Simnel rebellion was an unusual revolt, in which a ten-year-old boy by the name of Lambert Simnel was believed to resemble the son of Edward IV. This sparked a Yorkist rebellion led by the Earl of Lincoln that was eventually put down by Henry VII's army at Stoke Field. This battle is sometimes referred to as the final skirmish of the War of the Roses.

There were some further rebellions across the nation, predominantly in York and Cornwall, but perhaps the largest uprising was the Warbeck rebellion of 1491. A young Frenchman by the name of Perkin Warbeck claimed that he was the Duke of York and therefore an heir to the throne. Much like the earlier Simnel rebellion, this revelation caused uproar in Scotland, Ireland and some parts of England, as Henry's fragile early reign was threatened once again. After many false dawns, Warbeck landed in Cornwall hoping to ignite more anti-monarchy sentiment after the earlier Cornish rebellion. 6,000 men advanced northeast to Taunton but were defeated when they reached Hampshire. Warbeck's subsequent execution proved to the Spanish that the Tudor monarchy was strong enough to sanction the marriage of Catherine of Aragon to Prince Arthur.


Lambert Simnel claimed to be the last surviving male of the house of York

this sort of clause had been inserted in a treaty; under Edward IV's reign in the 15th century, Spain had tried (unsuccessfully) to marry the future Edward V to Infanta Isabel, Princess of Asturias. The marriage of Arthur and Catherine was delayed for a few years after the Spaniards became anxious that Henry's reign was not as sturdy as they once thought, with a series of uprisings. These concerns were quickly put to bed by the English monarchy as the Warbeck Rebellion was crushed.

15-year-old Catherine arrived in England in October 1501 after terms were finally agreed at a meeting in Calais. Prior to her coming to English shores, Arthur used the Latin he was taught by his personal advisors to send the princess letters. More polite than they were romantic, Catherine still found the time to write back as the prince and princess got to know each other.

On the day of the wedding, a lavish ceremony was put on by the famously frugal Henry Tudor at St Paul's Cathedral. Stands were put up in the nave for the most prestigious guests, a fanfare of trumpeters played, and a red baize platform was erected for the bride and groom to say their vows. After the wedding, the newlyweds relocated to Ludlow Castle to begin married life, safe in the knowledge that their marriage was a diplomatic dream for both England and Spain.

> When they first met, Catherine and Arthur couldn't talk to each other as they had learnt different pronunciations of Latin

Ludlow was specially chosen so the Prince of Wales could strengthen ties in the region he ruled over. While in the castle, Arthur learnt the ideas of kingship to get him ready for the throne for when his father passed away. Having never seen Catherine in person before their marriage, Arthur is said to have been smitten with the princess from Aragon and to have written to his parents saying that he would be "a true and loving husband". The English monarchy was initially uncomfortable with the idea of the 15-year-old Arthur cohabitating with Catherine, but this was allowed after coercion from Spain.

Tragically, Arthur fell ill in March 1502 and died less than a month later. His condition was believed to have been tuberculosis, although other theories claim that he died from plague, or the so-called 'sweating sickness' that was rife in Europe at the time (which may have been a form of hantavirus). It is argued by some that his disease was genetic and would later affect his nephew Edward VI's health. His father did not attend the funeral, with some accounts suggesting that it was down to the distance to travel, while others believe that he was simply too upset to be

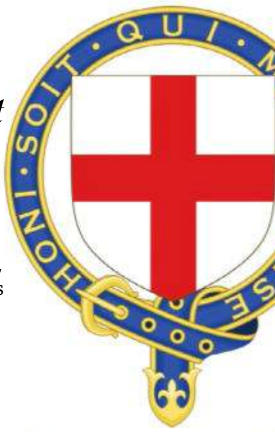
> "Arthur fell ill in March 1502 and died less than a month later. His condition was believed to have been tuberculosis"

Defining moment

Knight of the realm

May 1491

At the tender age of four, Prince Arthur is made a Knight of the Garter, at St George's Chapel in Windsor. This is in addition to his earlier honour as a Knight of the Bath, and being made the first ever Prince of Wales.


HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE

1486

- **Royal baby**
Henry VII's first-born son, Arthur is the first child of the Tudor dynasty. It is hoped that the young prince will grow to become a strong King of England.
19 September 1486

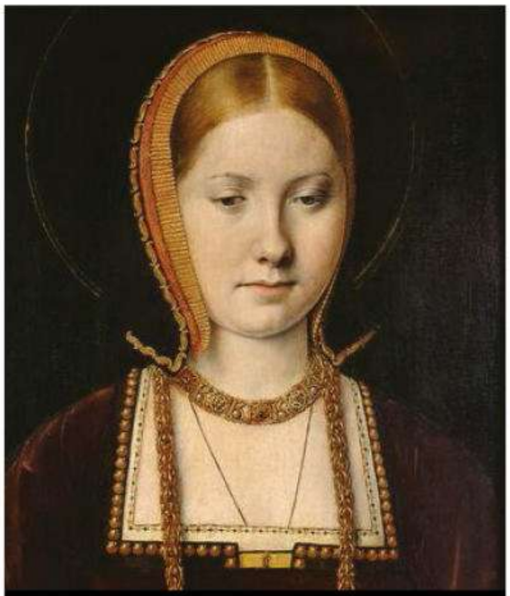
- **Prince of Wales**
At the tender age of three, Arthur becomes the first Prince of Wales as well as the Earl of Chester. He has already been the Duke of Cornwall from birth.
November 1489

- **Medina del Campo**
To combat the threat of France, England and Spain make an alliance. Known as the Treaty of Medina del Campo, part of the deal is a royal wedding.
March 1489

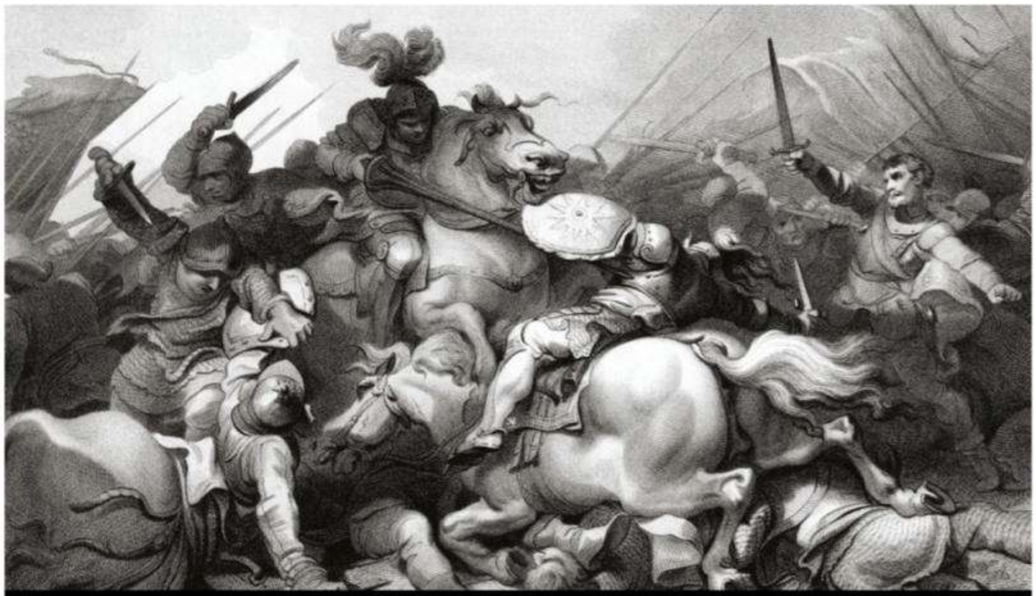
- **Education and tutoring**
Being the heir to the throne, Arthur has the best tutors in the land. His education helps him to learn the necessary skills required to be a king in Tudor England.
1491

- **Catherine arrives in England**
The Princess of Aragon leaves the port of Corunna to make her journey to England. The voyage is frequently delayed due to unfavourable winds and storms at sea.
October 1501

- **A Tudor wedding**
Making her journey from Plymouth to London, young Catherine is taken to St Paul's Cathedral to marry 15-year-old Arthur in a grand ceremony.
14 November 1501



Catherine of Aragon arrived in England in 1501. She would go on to marry Henry VIII after Arthur's death



The decisive battle in the Wars of the Roses was the battle of Bosworth Field, as the Lancastrian house of Tudor emerged victorious over the Yorkist army, resulting in the death of Richard III

there. An account from the time states: "When his Grace [Henry VII] understood that sorrowful heavy tydings, he sent for the Queene [Elizabeth of York], saying that he and his Queene would take the painful sorrows together." A procession was held in London six days later and on St George's Day, Arthur's body made the journey from Ludlow to Worcester Cathedral, where he would be buried.

There are theories that Henry VII wanted his second-born son, Henry, to be his heir instead of Arthur. Henry was both physically and mentally stronger, and it was thought that he would have the best chance of continuing the Tudor line. Some historians believe that Ludlow Castle, with its remote location, far from the best medicine in London, was an ideal way to kill Arthur off. This theory, however, is in the minority and many see Arthur's occupation of Ludlow as a way to extend Tudor rule over England and Wales, rather than a place for him to die.

Rumours persist over Henry's treatment of Arthur's funeral; it is believed the king spent a lot more time, money and effort on the funerals of the Earl of Northumberland in 1489 and Elizabeth of York in 1503. It is not known whether this was down to his apparent dislike of his son or whether he was simply too grief-stricken to put on a lavish funeral for him.

Passing away at just 15, Arthur was buried in Worcester Cathedral. Catherine was now a widow, but it would not be long until she married again, this time to Arthur's brother, Prince Henry, who would become Henry VIII after his father's death.

Had Arthur become king, it is questionable whether he would have ruled with as much success and vigour as his brother. Henry, a tall, strong and athletic man, had an aura about him that prevented any successful uprisings to his reign. However, it is possible that Tudor England may not have split from the Roman Catholic Church at the time it did, such was Henry VIII's desire to produce a male heir.

> Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine was complicated by uncertainty about Arthur's intimate relationship with the queen

Defining moment

Ludlow Castle occupation

January 1502

The newlyweds travel to Ludlow Castle in the Marches, which will become their royal residence. There is still controversy about whether the two young royals consummated their marriage or not.

Burial in Worcester

25 April 1502

At the end of the month, Arthur's body is taken to Worcester to be buried in the cathedral in the city. A chantry chapel is created specially to house the prince in. While the funeral is lavish, it is not as ostentatious as some.

Worsening sickness
Both Arthur and Catherine are struck down with an illness, with Arthur eventually passing away on 2 April 1502. Catherine survives but takes months to recover completely.
March 1502

News reaches London
Upon hearing of their son's death, both Henry and Elizabeth are distraught. There are theories that Henry preferred his younger son, Henry, to be king anyway, but there is minimal evidence to prove this.
4 April 1502

Funeral in London
A procession is carried out in London in memory of Prince Arthur. Songs are sung in every church in the city as the Tudor dynasty has lost the next in line to be king.
8 April 1502

The king is dead, long live the king
After the death of his son, Henry VII moves swiftly to satisfy the Spanish. The result is Catherine marrying Arthur's younger brother Henry, who will later become King Henry VIII.
1502

2002

Arthur's tomb located
Centuries after his death, the Tudor prince's lost grave is found by archaeologists using ground-penetrating radar. The body is found a few feet below the tomb that was built for Arthur after his death.
2002

1491 – 1547

Henry VIII

In pursuing dreams of victory in France, Henry threw England into decades of war and the chaos of a Europe in conflict

HENRY VIII

English, 1491-1547

Brief Bio

As king, Henry spent lavishly, courted conflict and pursued his own leisurely interests. His most enduring legacy is that, to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry separated England from the Catholic church. However, he is still better known for his six wives and how he rid himself of five.

Henry VIII was born dreaming of war. When he took the throne in April 1509, with his bride Catherine of Aragon at his side, Henry knew exactly what kind of king he wanted to be. His would be a glorious reign that would restore England to the magnificence it deserved. His father, Henry VII, had become unpopular by levying punishing taxes to restore the country's finances, but the new king had no intention of focusing on matters as petty as the treasury. He would be a conqueror.

By the end of his life, Henry was a bloated and frustrated mockery of the athletic youth that he had once been. He had grown up jousting, riding and hunting, and would often participate in chivalry tournaments in disguise. He had grown up hearing the stories of the great Henry V - the hero of Agincourt - and had dreamed of the battles that years of peace had deprived him of. He was determined that he would repeat his ancestor's triumphs in France and expand England's territory beyond Calais - perhaps even as far as Paris. He wholly believed that France belonged to him and

> "He had grown up with stories of the great Henry V - the hero of Agincourt - and dreamed of such battles"

– fortunately for the English monarch – he did not have to wait long to stake his claim.

Henry had grown up in years of stultifying peace thanks to his father's treaties with France and Aragon in Spain. Meanwhile, just across the Channel, the continent was in the throes of war. The powers of Europe clashed over the possession of Naples, essentially turning Italy into one big battleground. A quarrel over the region of Romagna had set Venice against the Vatican, and so Pope Julius II rallied France, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain (under Ferdinand II) in the final weeks of 1508, planning to split the Venetian territories among them.

Venice fell, but Julius feared French occupation of Italy. He mounted an impulsive attack on his allies which backfired as French forces stormed south in retaliation. A terrified Julius formed the Holy League, and Spain and the Holy Roman Empire sided with the papacy in 1511.

Henry VIII had now been on the throne for two years with his queen Catherine of Aragon (Ferdinand's daughter) at his side. A strong royal family was vital to his dream of a glorious England and he announced that he would marry her shortly after his father died. Catherine was fiercely loyal and determined to meet her king's expectations. She became pregnant almost immediately but their child was stillborn. It was a matter of weeks until Catherine was with child again, and she gave birth to a son, Henry, on New Year's Day, 1511. Sadly, Henry would survive for just seven weeks.

At this point, Henry was a young king just beginning his reign. He was the head of a proud royal family and he had shown his subjects that he was not the penny-pinching tyrant that his father was. The Holy League would enable him to serve his God and show France the power of England's might. The full force of that might would be delivered by Henry's expanding Royal Navy, which would boast the world's largest and most advanced warships. It is important not to underestimate the importance of the pope's blessing. He was still a devout Catholic and would go on to condemn the Protestant Martin Luther so harshly that the pope would give him the title 'Defender of the Faith'. His religion also included the concept of Divine Right; France was his God-given property. The Holy League should have been undefeatable.

> "Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy"

However, the first attack ended in disaster. An English force sailed to Gascony in June 1512, due to meet up with Ferdinand's army and claim the region of Aquitaine for Henry. Unfortunately, Ferdinand decided that he was more interested in claiming Navarre for himself and directed his troops in that direction. Ill-equipped and ravaged by dysentery, the English troops were forced to retreat. Henry was furious but resolute.

THOMAS WOLSEY

English, circa 1475-1530

Brief Bio

Cardinal Wolsey rose to power due to his ability to ensure that Henry got what he wanted. He was deeply ambitious and a skilled political operator. He became archbishop of York, and was made a cardinal and lord chancellor in 1515. He was instrumental in the peace process following Henry's first war in France, and often took public blame for Henry's mistakes. Wolsey's ambitions of becoming pope would be scuppered when Henry's determination to split from Catherine of Aragon destroyed England's relationship with Rome. Scrabbling to reconcile his position in Rome with his duty to his king, Wolsey's failure to deliver papal approval would prove to be his downfall.

Less than a year later, a second invasion plan was underway, with much of the organisation left in the hands of the invaluable Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man for a king like Henry, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy while sharing a similarly rabid ambition. Wolsey was a fixer; he made sure that whatever Henry wanted, Henry got. What Henry wanted was France, and so, in April 1513, an army was raised and an attack was made on Brest.

This incursion proved even more disastrous than the attempt on Aquitaine, but Henry would not be dissuaded and personally accompanied the English landing at Calais in June. With his feet on French soil and standing at the

Debacle at Gascony

June 1512

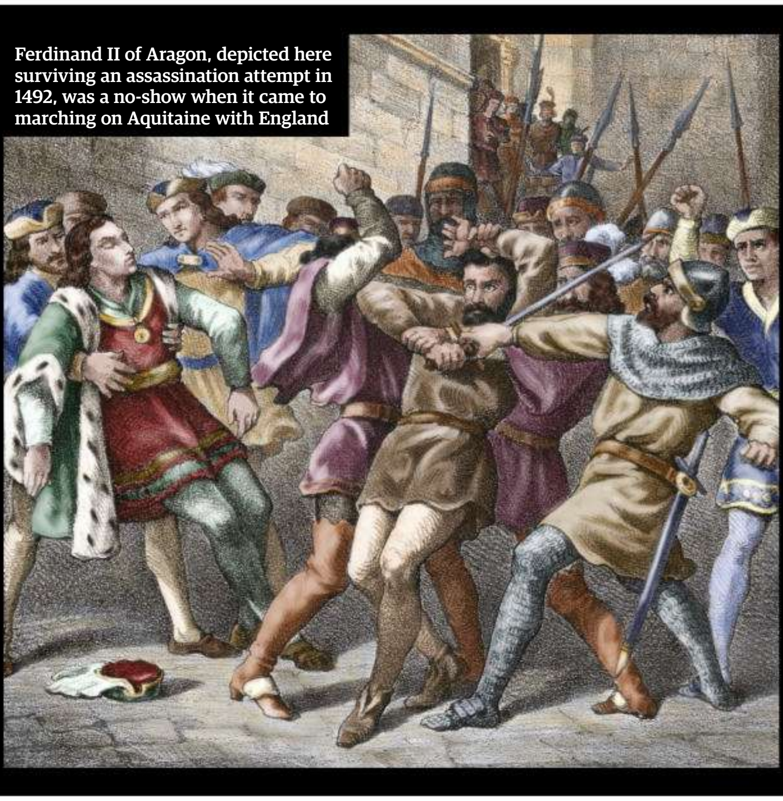
Henry's only concern prior to the expedition to Gascony was that he couldn't be there. It was the first attack on France during his reign and it should have been the first step in a glorious campaign. Henry was all too eager to ally himself with his father-in-law, Ferdinand II, who had similar ambitions to claim French territory. Both kings had joined the Holy League, which had been created in response to France's military activity in Italy. The League had decided that Ferdinand and Henry should attack together and it should have been an impressive display of force.

The Marquis of Dorset was given control of the English forces and the invaders were due to march with Ferdinand on Aquitaine. However, once the Marquis set foot on dry land, he discovered that the Spanish king had not kept his word. Instead, Ferdinand was occupied with his own attack on Navarre, which better served the Spanish king's own interests. The Marquis's troops quarrelled with the few Spanish forces that they had been given and many of his men succumbed to dysentery. As a result of all this, he had no choice but to retreat.

Although Henry can't be blamed for the failure of this attack, it shows the Holy League for what it really was. The kings were fighting with the pope's blessing and the glory of God, but they were all out for themselves. Once the fighting started, each monarch was really only interested in what land they could claim – their allies only functioned as a bank and backup.

Verdict

The forced retreat enraged Henry, pushing him towards leading his own attack, and also sowed the seeds of distrust that would come more prominently to the fore throughout his further campaigns



Ferdinand II of Aragon, depicted here surviving an assassination attempt in 1492, was a no-show when it came to marching on Aquitaine with England

Victory at Flodden Field

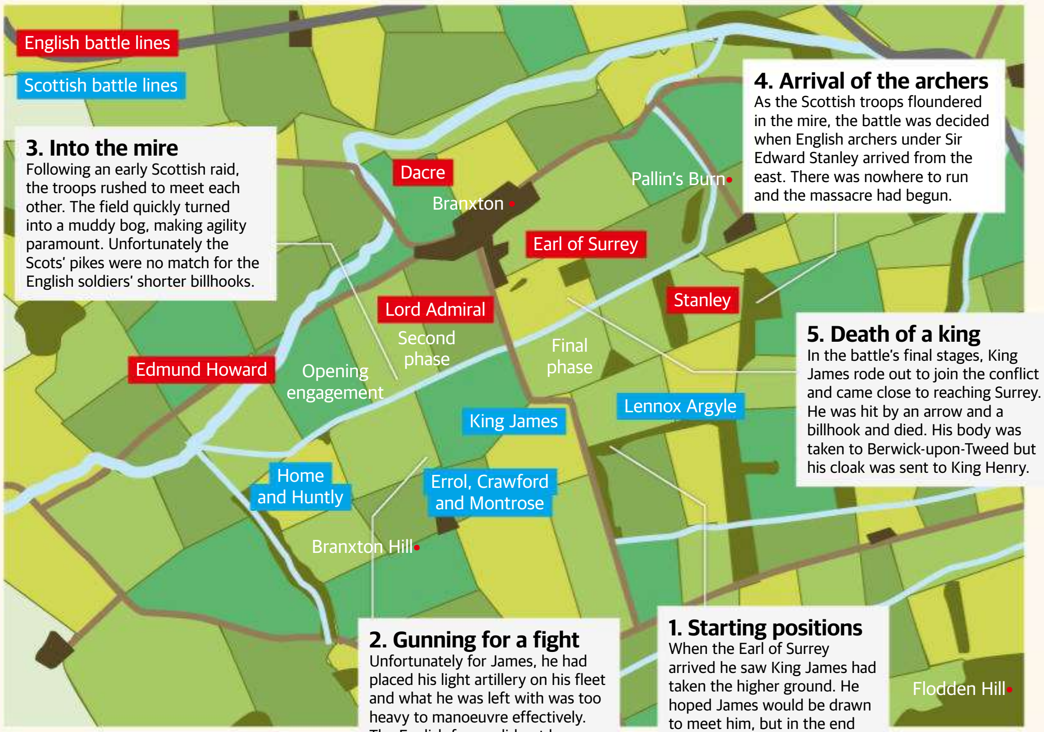
9 September 1513

With the king's attention focused on France, the timing was ripe for an attack from the north. King Louis XII reached out to his ally in Scotland and James IV was very agreeable. He wrote to Henry instructing him to abandon his war on the French – an instruction that Henry roundly ignored. The Scottish troops rallied and marched south to the border, sending word that they intended to invade. Having appeased their sense of honour, they waited for the English troops at Flodden.

Catherine of Aragon was acting as regent while her husband was at war in France. Catherine was a woman who believed fiercely in duty, honour and loyalty, and the prospect of losing a battle in her husband's absence was too awful to even consider.

Together with the Earl of Surrey, Catherine raised an army from the Midlands to meet the Scottish invaders. Surrey met the Scottish army at Flodden Field and subjected them to a crushing defeat. The number of Scottish dead numbered in the thousands, and King James IV himself was among the fatalities.

While Henry's refusal to leave France may have been the final straw that prompted the attack, he had very little to do with the result of the battle – it was the Earl of Surrey who won the day. The Scottish king fell on the battlefield, and his cloak was sent to France as a trophy for Henry. A decisive victory, but not one which can be attributed to any military excellence on Henry's part.



1. Starting positions
When the Earl of Surrey arrived he saw King James had taken the higher ground. He hoped James would be drawn to meet him, but in the end Surrey flanked from the east and arrived from the north.

2. Gunning for a fight
Unfortunately for James, he had placed his light artillery on his fleet and what he was left with was too heavy to manoeuvre effectively. The English forces did not have this problem and promptly started their bombardment.

3. Into the mire
Following an early Scottish raid, the troops rushed to meet each other. The field quickly turned into a muddy bog, making agility paramount. Unfortunately the Scots' pikes were no match for the English soldiers' shorter billhooks.

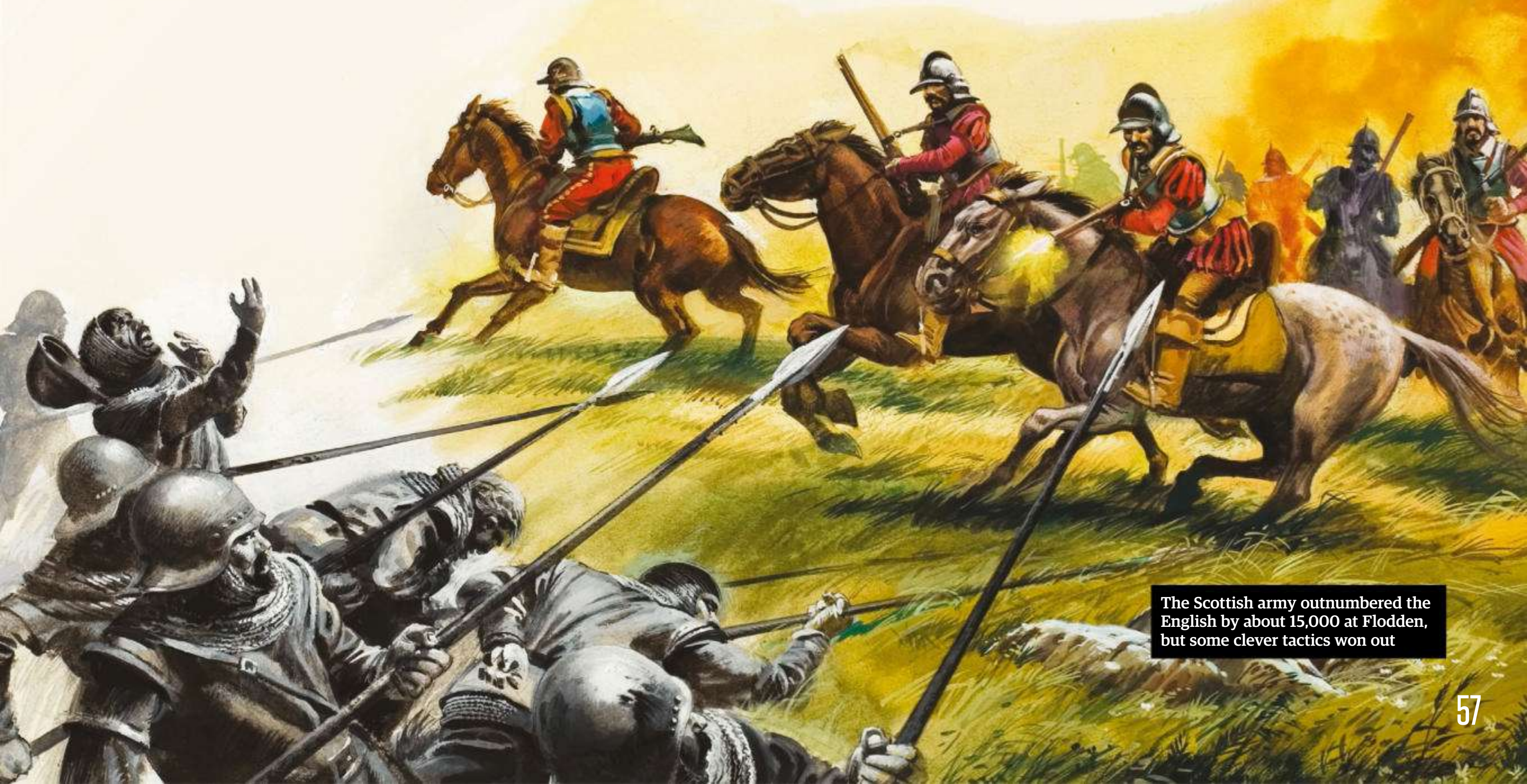
4. Arrival of the archers
As the Scottish troops floundered in the mire, the battle was decided when English archers under Sir Edward Stanley arrived from the east. There was nowhere to run and the massacre had begun.

5. Death of a king
In the battle's final stages, King James rode out to join the conflict and came close to reaching Surrey. He was hit by an arrow and a billhook and died. His body was taken to Berwick-upon-Tweed but his cloak was sent to King Henry.

Verdict

While the victory would assure Henry of England's military might, it was the start of a long and costly struggle with the Scots that would distract him from his goals in France.

> "The Scottish king fell on the battlefield, and his cloak was sent to France as a trophy for Henry"



The Scottish army outnumbered the English by about 15,000 at Flodden, but some clever tactics won out

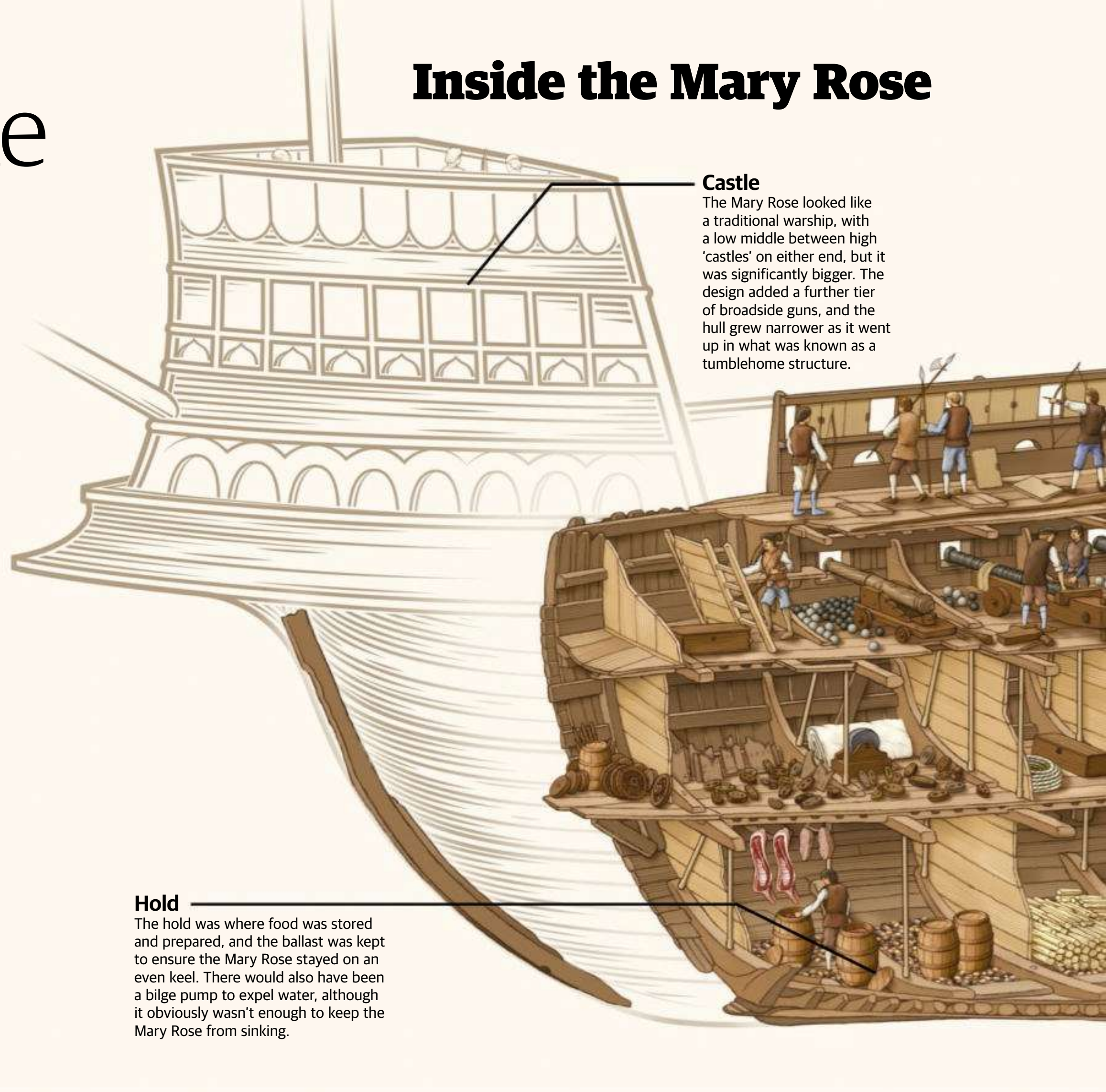
Father of the Royal Navy

Henry might be known as the founder of the Royal Navy but its creation had begun during the reign of Henry VII. Five royal warships had been built by the time Henry VIII took the throne, but the young king wanted more from his military might.

Henry knew that Scotland had invested in their own navy and that he was potentially facing a two-pronged attack by sea. Henry ordered the construction of two great warships: the infamous Mary Rose (which embarrassingly and mysteriously sank while leading the defence against the French at the Solent) and the Peter Pomegranate. Henry's ambition knew no limits and the English Navy would be the biggest, the most advanced and the most fearsome. He equipped his ships with the latest guns and the heaviest cannons, while employing new innovations like hinged gun ports. By the end of Henry's reign, his fleet numbered 58.

Enormous gunships aside, perhaps the most important innovations Henry made to the navy were on land. He created the first naval dock in Portsmouth, he gave the Grant of the Royal Charter to Trinity House (which developed beacons, buoys and lighthouses), and he created the Navy Board and the Office of Admiralty. Henry is known as the father of the Royal Navy because he didn't just bulk up its muscle, he created its backbone.

Inside the Mary Rose



Castle
The Mary Rose looked like a traditional warship, with a low middle between high 'castles' on either end, but it was significantly bigger. The design added a further tier of broadside guns, and the hull grew narrower as it went up in what was known as a tumblehome structure.

Hold
The hold was where food was stored and prepared, and the ballast was kept to ensure the Mary Rose stayed on an even keel. There would also have been a bilge pump to expel water, although it obviously wasn't enough to keep the Mary Rose from sinking.

head of an English army, Henry was exhilarated. He made straight for the town of Thérouanne and promptly laid siege to it. The Holy Roman Emperor and fellow Holy League leader, Maximilian, joined him soon afterwards, helping to assure Henry that he was on the side of the angels. Finally, Henry tasted glory on 16 August 1513 when the French attacked in the Battle of the Spurs. The light French cavalry were unable to withstand the combined forces of the invaders and fled. Henry claimed the day as a great victory, which was consolidated when Thérouanne surrendered on 22 August. The subsequent capture of Tournai was just as important to Henry, and he kept that town as an English stronghold while giving Thérouanne to Maximilian as a gesture of their allegiance.

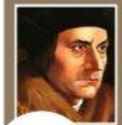
What had Henry actually achieved? He'd taken two towns from the French, but Paris was a long way away. Nothing he'd done would tip the scales in either direction, but this was just the beginning. Henry was in his element. He was re-enacting the glories of Henry V and who knew how far he could go? Even as Henry celebrated his victories in France, trouble at home soon threatened to bring everything to a halt. All too aware of the English forces currently on their soil, the French reached out to King James IV of Scotland and suggested that this might be the perfect opportunity to mount an attack of their own. James marched south to Flodden Ridge with his armies to await the English.

While England may have seemed weak, Queen Catherine, acting as regent, had no intention of allowing such a challenge to go unanswered. An army was raised and met the Scots on 9 September. The English victory was brutally decisive and King James was killed. The gleeful queen sent the fallen monarch's bloody cloak to her husband in France, with the message: "In this your Grace shall see how I keep my promise, sending you for your banners a king's coat." Henry was conquering his enemies abroad, while his queen was seeing off attackers at home.

Sadly for the warrior king, peace was just around the corner, whether Henry wanted it or not. He had been acting as a war chest to his allies and England's coffers were so depleted that there was simply no way that he could carry on alone. He would have to make peace. The next few years presented Henry with a new potential ally, and a new enemy. The ambitious Francis I took the French crown, while the Austrian King Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor (adding Spain and a huge portion of Italy to his kingdom). Wolsey, aware of the financial sinkhole that the wars had been, worked hard to keep the peace. He managed to put quills to paper with the Treaty of London in 1518, while friendship would be forged at the Field of the Cloth of Gold on 7 June 1520. The plan was that Henry and Francis would spend a week enjoying the festivities and settling their differences, while Wolsey met with Charles V. It did not go according to plan.

THOMAS MORE

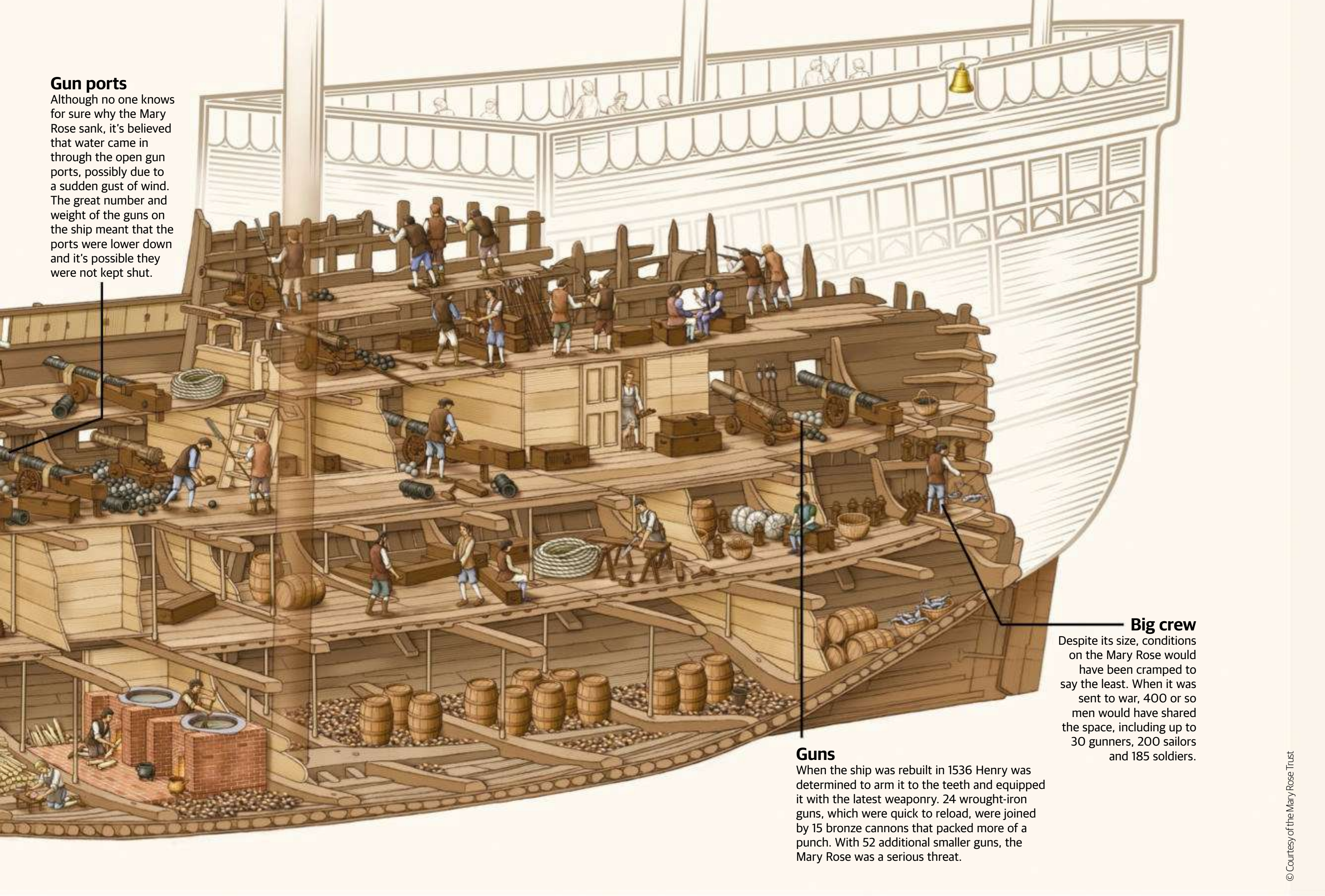
English, 1478-1535



Brief Bio

Thomas More trained as a lawyer and nearly became a monk before entering Henry's employ in 1517, taking on a variety of roles from interpreter to writer and chief diplomat. The two quickly became close confidants and More was knighted four years later, before becoming the speaker of the House of Commons in 1523. It was his strong Catholic faith that would prove his downfall. Although he was made lord chancellor in 1529, he rejected the formation of the Church of England with Henry at its head, so resigned soon after. His refusal to accept the new denomination would lead to his arrest and eventual execution on 6 July 1535.

For all Wolsey's good intentions, this attempt at friendship was doomed from the start. Henry had never wanted peace to start with,



Gun ports
Although no one knows for sure why the Mary Rose sank, it's believed that water came in through the open gun ports, possibly due to a sudden gust of wind. The great number and weight of the guns on the ship meant that the ports were lower down and it's possible they were not kept shut.

Big crew
Despite its size, conditions on the Mary Rose would have been cramped to say the least. When it was sent to war, 400 or so men would have shared the space, including up to 30 gunners, 200 sailors and 185 soldiers.

Guns
When the ship was rebuilt in 1536 Henry was determined to arm it to the teeth and equipped it with the latest weaponry. 24 wrought-iron guns, which were quick to reload, were joined by 15 bronze cannons that packed more of a punch. With 52 additional smaller guns, the Mary Rose was a serious threat.

© Courtesy of the Mary Rose Trust

> "Henry's ambition to conquer France was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it"

and Francis had no intention of bowing down to his English counterpart. Ambitious, stubborn and proud, the two men were too similar for any attempts at friendship to work. After the first meeting was concluded, the two kings engaged in a week of oneupmanship and competition. It was a week dedicated to flaunting power and status; the 'cloth of gold' referred to the ludicrously lavish tents. Henry was determined to prove his athleticism and joined the competitions, but Francis had a similar idea. Henry had to suffer the humiliation of losing to the French king in a wrestling match, and it is hardly surprising that the only result of the meeting was a greater sense of hatred. Instead, Henry turned his diplomatic attentions to Charles V.

Henry's alliance with the Habsburgs had continued throughout the years of peace, despite one or two hiccups involving marriage arrangements. Crucially, Charles and Henry shared a mutual loathing of Martin Luther and King Francis. His hatred of the French king meant that war was inevitable and Henry eagerly awaited the perfect opportunity to mount another attack. When hostilities resumed in 1521, Henry declared that England was now allied with the Holy Roman Emperor and signed the Treaty of Windsor in 1522 to make 'The Great Enterprise' official. At this point in his plans, Henry could not afford a full-scale invasion and an attack on Picardy failed due to a lack of communication and, perhaps more importantly, trust.

Henry's ambition to conquer France and claim the throne for himself was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it. He had previously helped to bankroll Ferdinand and Maximilian and he had seen them make peace without him. Henry was scared that Charles might repeat his father's trick and, for his part, Charles had no particular interest in seeing Henry on the French throne. Their mutual distrust would only grow.

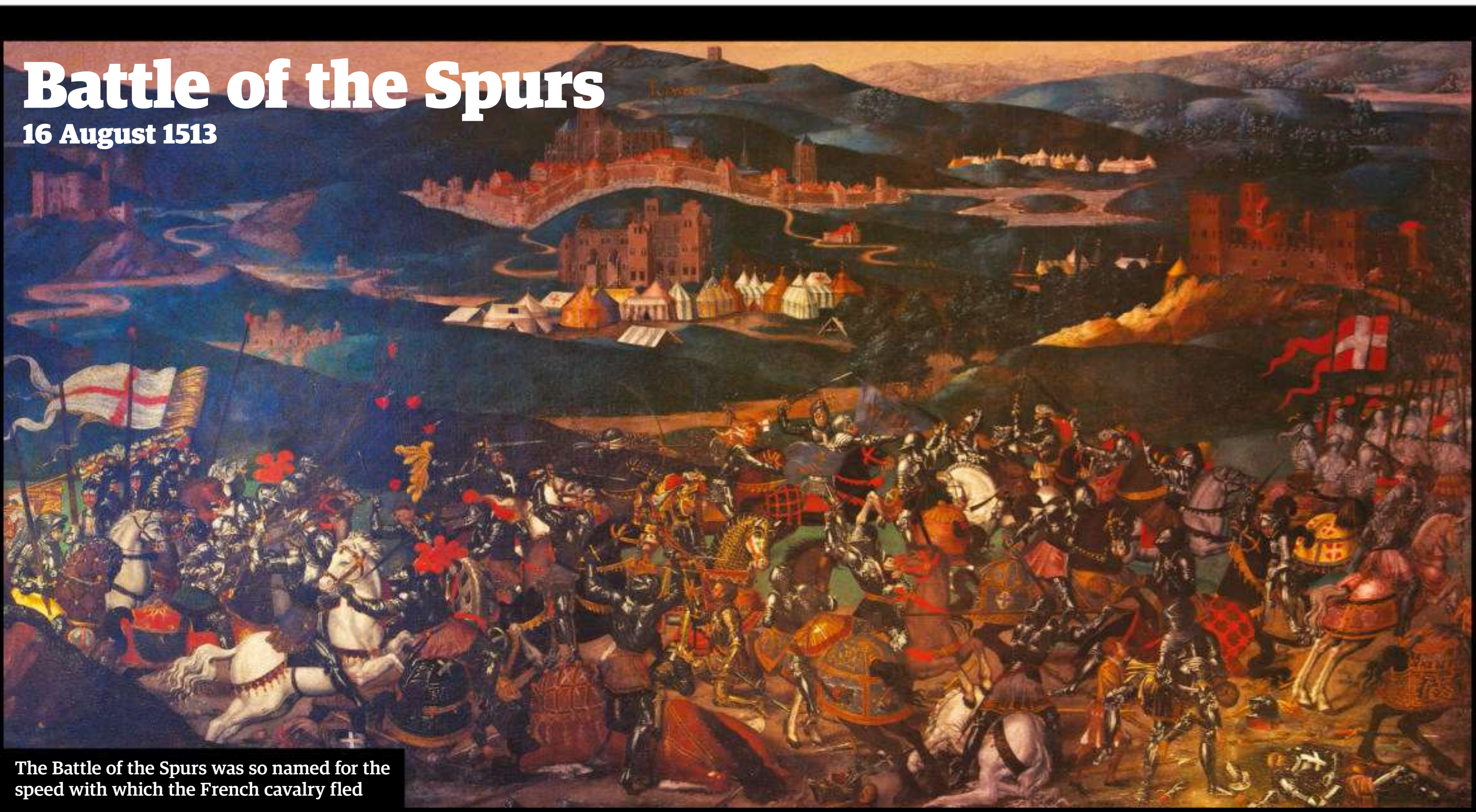
Trust wasn't the only problem. In an echo of 1513, Henry was distracted by the constant threat from the north. Whenever he began a campaign in France, the Scottish forces would threaten attack, forcing him to wage a war on two fronts. Henry was enraged and infuriated but he would not give up. He mounted another attack in 1523 to support the rebelling Duke of Bourbon, but Charles sent no help and the English troops were forced to retreat.

The line was finally crossed when Charles captured Francis at the Battle of Pavia in 1525 and showed no interest in sharing his spoils with the English king. Henry decided that the time had come for a full-scale invasion. With nowhere near enough money, Henry and Cardinal Wolsey tried to create the 'Amicable Grant' tax to pay for the attack, but opposition proved so fierce that Henry was forced to scrap his plans and publicly blame Wolsey. The humiliation of backpedalling helped Henry to realise that he was not going to get what he wanted. He signed the Treaty of the More with Francis's mother, Louise of Savoy, and turned his attention towards his family.

Not surprisingly, Charles's rejection rankled Henry. The Holy Roman Emperor's increased presence in Italy once again caused the panicking Pope Clement VII to create the League of Cognac,

Battle of the Spurs

16 August 1513



The Battle of the Spurs was so named for the speed with which the French cavalry fled

Henry and his English forces had been laying siege to the town of Thérouanne since July 1513. Following the embarrassment at Gascony, he had finally arrived in France to lead his army to great conquest. He camped close, but not too close to the city, and laid siege. A stalemate ensued until French action on 16 August tipped the scales.

The French forces had seen Maximilian's Holy Roman Army join Henry's and decided that the time had come to attempt a counterattack. On the morning of 16 August, French light cavalry, a few thousand strong, attacked the invaders' positions. However, word had reached the Holy League's camp of the planned attack and a trap had been prepared, leading to a brutal skirmish. It was an attack that was ultimately doomed to fail, with Henry and Maximilian's combined forces coming to roughly 30,000 men. The speed with which the surviving French rode away led to the name of the battle.

It was not a significant military victory in any other term than morale. Henry had been looking for a victory to claim in France, and this encounter was the first real battle of his campaign. He celebrated it but the actual gains from the Battle of the Spurs and the subsequent fall of Thérouanne would impress nothing but his ego. At great financial expense, Henry's dreams of Agincourt came a little closer.

Verdict

The victory at the Battle of the Spurs did more for Henry's ego than it did for the outcome of his campaign, essentially proving to be an incredibly expensive display.

> "Overjoyed at having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was dangerous"

which united Venice, Florence and France against Charles. Henry was not a member, but offered to help bankroll the group. His treaty with Francis in the Treaty of Westminster on 30 April 1527 was a sign that his mind was elsewhere.

Henry was desperate to be separated from Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn. He had no interest in a divorce and instead wanted to prove that it had been illegal to marry his brother's widow. This would soothe the good Catholic in him, but it set him against Charles V, who was appalled by what the accusation said about his aunt, Catherine. However, circumstances were not in Henry's favour; Charles had attacked Rome in retaliation for the League's advances. Pope Clement VII was now his prisoner and Catherine's nephew made his influence felt. Clement gained his freedom in December, but the emperor had no interest in peace talks with the League. Once again, Charles had frustrated Henry's plans and he declared war with the Holy Roman Emperor in January. However, England lacked the finances to do any more than declare itself at war; it's unlikely that this worried Charles too much. The situation in Europe finally resolved itself in 1529 with the Treaty of Cambrai. However, Henry's determination to end his marriage had made enemies out of his old allies. Francis offered to plead his case to the new Pope Clement, but he was more concerned with cementing his own alliance with the Holy See. Anne Boleyn's pregnancy pushed Henry into taking decisive action and his marriage to Catherine was annulled by Thomas Cranmer in 1533. In the eyes of the English court, his secret marriage to Anne was now completely legal. Finally, Henry was recognised as Head of the Church and abolished the right of Appeal to Rome. England was no longer Catholic and the pope had no more influence over the king.

Although he was overjoyed at finally having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was a dangerous prospect indeed. He tried to take advantage of the frequent arguments between Charles and Francis, but in 1538 the excommunication order for Henry was finally delivered and the pope declared that the Vatican would support anyone who deposed the English king; his death was something God would turn a blind eye to. Luckily for Henry, Charles was busy with the Ottoman Empire and, if Francis planned to attack England, he had no intention of doing so alone. Henry knew that the differences between Francis and Charles would prevent them from ever remaining allies for long. He just had to be patient. Finally, in 1542, they declared war and Henry could return to the battlefield.

By this point Henry was obese, sickly and prone to violent rages. The war gave him a sense of

The Siege of Boulogne

19 July – 18 September 1544

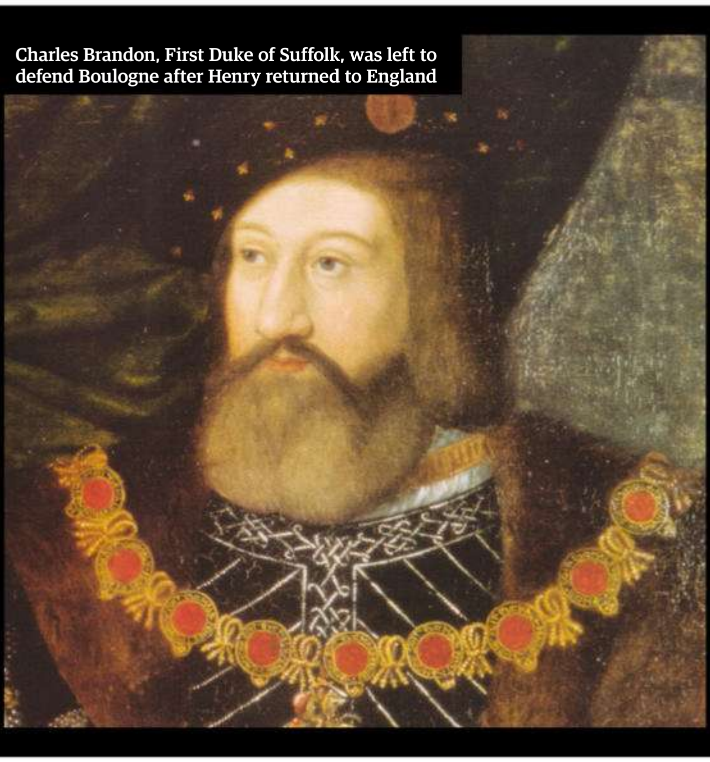
The Siege of Boulogne would be the closest thing to an unqualified victory that Henry would get in all his years of war with France. However, the conquest of a single city at tremendous expense tells us that unqualified is not really the most accurate adjective to use. Henry had been waiting for an excuse to resume hostilities with France and he eagerly joined his old ally (and old enemy) Charles V when war broke out in 1544. He raised a huge invasion force to set sail across the Channel.

The English force was split into two;=, attacking Montreuil and Boulogne, with Henry himself joining the latter. While the attack on Montreuil failed, the Siege of Boulogne, though lengthy, would result in success. The siege began on 19 July and the English forces quickly took the lower part of the city. However, they were unable to breach the castle walls and the siege stretched from weeks into months. Henry wrote to his wife (number six, Catherine Parr) praising the strength of his opponents, but it was only a matter of time before the French were forced to surrender, which they did after Henry's forces tunnelled beneath the walls.

However, Henry's triumph would be short-lived. He learned that Charles, fearful of the Ottoman threat and caring little about Henry's personal ambition, had made his own peace treaty with France without England. Henry returned home to attend to Scotland, leaving Boulogne occupied, and Francis began preparations for a counterattack.

Verdict

Henry may have taken the city, but the financial cost was enormous. Although Charles's treaty led to threats of a French invasion, Francis's attempts ultimately failed.



Charles Brandon, First Duke of Suffolk, was left to defend Boulogne after Henry returned to England

purpose and Charles was finally back on his side. For all their past differences, now there were no personal reasons why Henry and Charles could not resume their alliance. Catherine of Aragon had passed away and, by executing Anne Boleyn, Henry had removed the insult to Charles' honour. Across the Channel, Francis wasn't sitting idly by and he knew how to keep Henry distracted.

Scotland had proved to be a continual thorn in Henry's paw during his attempts to invade France, attacking every time his attention was focused across the Channel. Having hoped that James V would be a more amenable ally than his predecessor, Henry was livid when Scotland refused to follow him in separating from Rome. When James did not appear at the diplomatic talks at York in 1541, outright conflict followed. Following a minor Scottish victory at the Battle of Haddon Rig in 1542, the two armies met at Solway Moss. In a brutal echo of Flodden Field, the Scottish army suffered a humiliating defeat. James V died of fever about two weeks later and Henry, once again buoyed by such a decisive victory, turned his attention to France.

Henry was taking no half measures and invaded France on two fronts. Stretching his finances as far as they would go, he sent troops to Montreuil under the Duke of Norfolk, while another force attacked Boulogne under the Duke of Suffolk. While Norfolk failed, Suffolk succeeded. Henry himself arrived to take charge of the siege which lasted from July until September when the city fell. He basked in the glory of a French city claimed, but his elation was short-lived. Henry was forced to turn his attention back to Scotland, where a rebellion had sprung up. His retaliation was so brutal that it became known as the 'Rough Wooing'.

The Rough Wooing

December 1543 – March 1550

The Rough Wooing was the result of Henry's failed attempt to subdue Scotland while he turned his attention to France. Although he might have won a huge victory at the Battle of Solway Moss, Henry's hopes that the Scottish would be amenable to peace proved to be ill-founded. He had given them his terms, but Henry may as well have given them a blank piece of paper, as Scotland declared its renewed allegiance to France.

At the time, Henry was planning his invasion with Charles V and could not afford to be distracted by yet another full-blown conflict with his neighbours in the north. Deciding against open battle, Henry commanded that a force should sail north and show the Scots how furious he was. It was led by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who was told to "Burn Edinburgh town, so razed and defaced when you have sacked and gotten what you can of it, as there may remain forever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God."

Towns and villages were to be burned down and destroyed, and the king's strict instructions as to what to do with anyone who opposed Hertford were clear; he was commanded to continue "putting man, woman and child to fire and sword, without exception, where any resistance shall be made against you." Hertford obeyed his liege's orders with relish, sending frequent reports of his conquests back to his king, and capturing Edinburgh and the nearby port at Leith. However, France did not sit idly by, but instead sent forces to help Scottish counterattacks. This dual campaign of aggression between England and Scotland would only be (temporarily) halted by the Treaty of Camp in 1546.

Verdict

Although it had the immediate effect that Henry wanted, which was to give a show of force and wrath, the Rough Wooing only served to deeper entrench hatred and distrust of the English.

The invasion of France fell apart when Charles signed another continental peace treaty that excluded England. Francis had no intention of making peace with Henry and mounted an invasion in the summer of 1545. It was a very real threat but, fortunately for Henry, the attack was a dismal failure and Francis was forced to retreat. The Treaty of Camp brought an end to the years of war in Henry's reign, as England, France, Scotland and the Holy Roman Empire agreed to peace in 1546.

He died a year later, sickly, angry and defeated. So what does Henry VIII's history as a military commander show us? It shows him to be a man unable or unwilling to grow out of the romantic, heroic dreams of his youth. He was constantly fighting for the glory that he saw for himself and for England. In his mind, France was English property that no one before him had been able to claim. He saw himself as the king who would bring it under English rule, and it was a childhood dream that became an adult delusion. By joining with allies who had no interest in his dream, and reacting rashly to insults, real and imagined, Henry spent many years at war with little to show for it.

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1485 – 1540

Thomas Cromwell

How a member of the poor working class became one of England's most important and ruthlessly political statesmen

Born in the wild west of 15th-century London into a humble working family from Putney, Thomas Cromwell's early life could not have been further removed from the splendid surroundings he would later come to enjoy. His childhood was surrounded by violence and poverty, and marked by an errant and erratic father – an alcoholic jack-of-all-trades called Walter, who ran an alehouse in town.

Cromwell senior was frequently in trouble. He was fined no less than 48 times for watering down his customers' ale and he found himself up before the court on charges of assault. This rubbed off on young Cromwell, who became a self-confessed 'ruffian' and given the strong hierarchy which existed in English society at the time, he was expected to rise no higher.

Cromwell operated a spy network which covered England, Scotland and Wales, and he would enjoy torturing his enemies

Hampered by a poor education and mixing in the wrong circles, nothing about Cromwell suggested that he could ever go down in history as one of England's most important statesmen. And yet that is what he did, undergoing an incredible transformation in his teenage years. His turning point was a decision – the reason for which has never been truly established – to leave England and head for mainland Europe. The Continent would certainly prove to be his making.

Cromwell served time as a mercenary soldier and in a Venetian bank, where the powerful Francesco Frescobaldi encouraged him to dig deep into his skill set. He soaked up all around him, picking up Italian, French, Latin and, some historians believe, Greek. When he returned to London, he was in a position to assume the role of lawyer and he also became a successful cloth merchant. Cromwell had become a learned man with a glowing, growing reputation.

Life was treating him well. Married to Elizabeth Wyckes, whose father had been a gentleman usher for Henry VII, Cromwell took an active role in London's influential society, using his legal skills to draft government petitions, and his charm and wit to put prominent people in touch with each other. He led an embassy to Rome in 1517-18 to obtain a Papal Bull of Indulgence from Pope Leo X for the town of Boston in Lincolnshire. He worked his way into the royal court as a member of the household of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, King Henry VIII's first minister and the person tasked with carrying out most of the monarch's day-to-day duties. Wolsey, like Cromwell, had also come from more humble beginnings and, as the son of a Ipswich butcher, he had become England's second most powerful person.

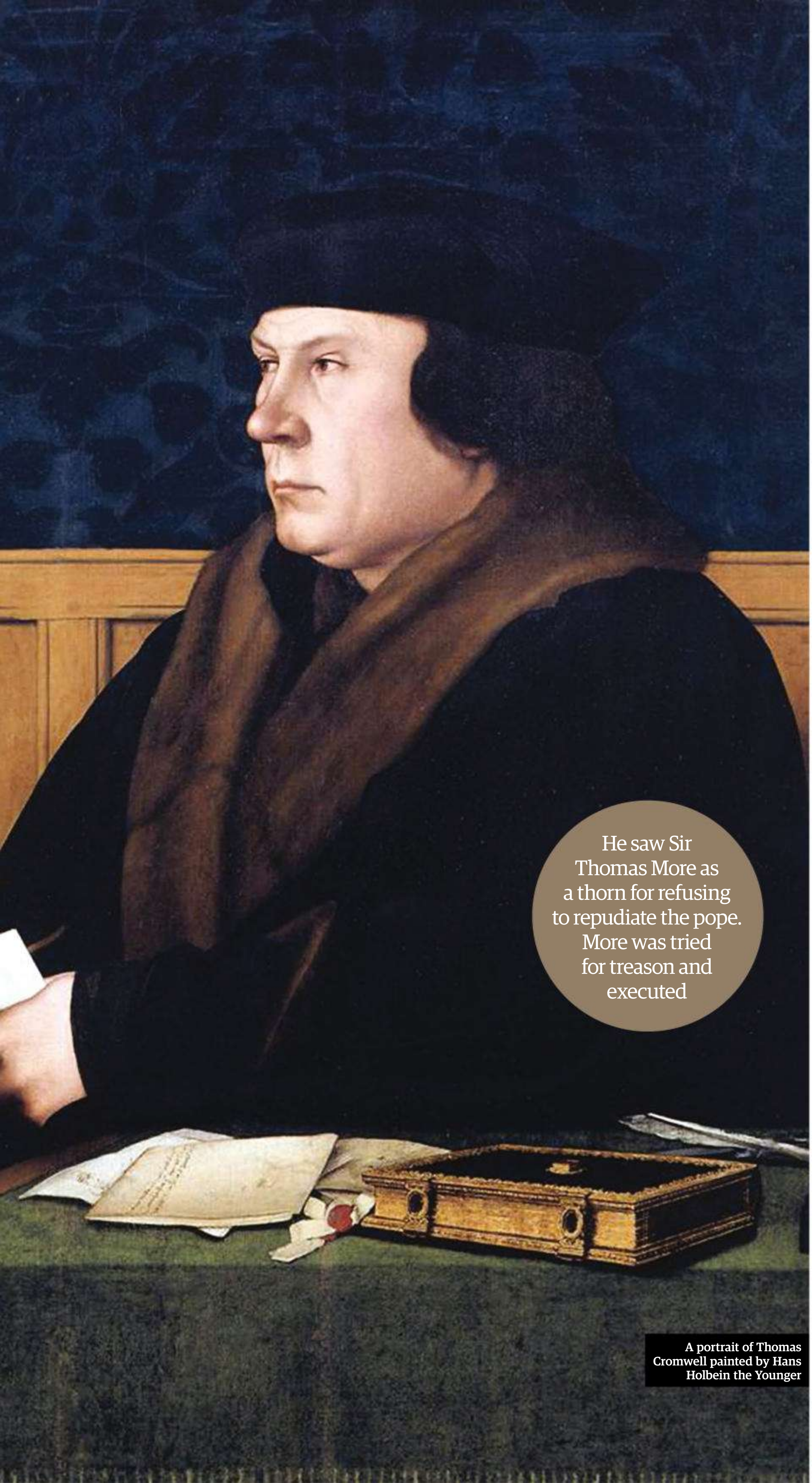
In 1523, Cromwell became a member of Parliament in the House of Commons. He grew ever closer to Wolsey, proving himself to be loyal and dependable. By constantly watching his master's moves, he was able to soak up the experience like a sponge. This led him to helping Wolsey in his dissolution of around 30 monasteries, and it also highlighted exactly how much power was on offer to the circles in which he now operated. The monasteries enabled Wolsey to raise a great deal of money to be used in founding a college school in Ipswich as a feeder to his other

THOMAS CROMWELL

English, 1485-1540

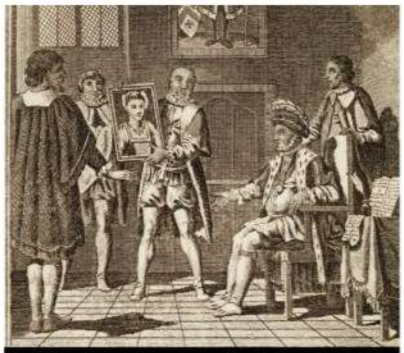
Brief Bio

Thomas Cromwell was born a commoner but he became the second most powerful man in England. Highly politically minded, ambitious and intelligent, he was at once loyal to the king, brutal and charming. As a strong supporter of the religious Reformation and the man who helped Henry VIII annul his marriage, Cromwell did much to change the future direction of England.



A portrait of Thomas Cromwell painted by Hans Holbein the Younger

> He saw Sir Thomas More as a thorn for refusing to repudiate the pope. More was tried for treason and executed



Thomas Cromwell shows Henry VIII Holbein's portrait of Anne of Cleves

Five more controversial advisors

Thomas Cranmer

Alongside Thomas Cromwell was Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury who established the basic structures of the Church of England. Cranmer helped to build the case for Henry VIII's annulment and he married the king to Anne Boleyn. He also supported the king as sovereign over the church.

Sir William Cecil

Sir William Cecil was Queen Elizabeth's chief advisor for much of her reign and the most powerful non-royal in England. He was fiercely loyal and would deal harshly with Catholics who betrayed the queen. He hired Sir Francis Walsingham to investigate Mary, Queen of Scots, who was eventually executed for treason.

Duke of Somerset

As the uncle to Edward VI who was just nine years old when he came to the throne, Edward Seymour, the 1st Duke of Somerset, exerted much power, effectively assuming the role of king. His brother, Thomas, was angry at the appointment and sibling rivalry emerged. This came to a head in 1549 when Thomas was executed for treason.

Henry Stafford

The second Duke of Buckingham was a strong supporter of Richard III and he helped the king in his claim to the throne. Young Edward V, along with his brother Richard of Shrewsbury, Duke of York, were seized and imprisoned. But within two months of Richard III being crowned, Buckingham plotted to overthrow him.

Sir John Conroy

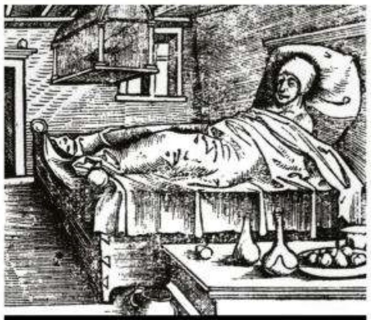
The third Duke of Norfolk was an advisor to Victoria Saxe-Saalfield-Coburg, Duchess of Kent, who raised the future Queen Victoria following the death of Edward, Duke of Kent. Conroy advised isolating the princess so that the royal dukes would be unable to negatively influence her. It was said to have made for an unhappy childhood.

Sweating sickness kills his family

Just as Thomas Cromwell was ascending to power (and prior to Thomas Wolsey's demise which paved the way), an immense personal tragedy hit his family. Cromwell's wife, Elizabeth Wyckes, died, aged 38 or 39 in 1528, due to a disease known as sweating sickness. It also claimed the lives of Cromwell's two daughters, Grace and Anne, but did not affect his son, Gregory.

The illness – described by physician John Caius in his 1556 work *De Ephemera Britannica*, or *Account of the Sweating Sickness in England* – had swept England first, emerging in 1485. Victims would suffer intense headaches, dizziness, aching limbs and shivers. They would go on to develop a fever and hot sweats, and their heart would palpitate. Leaving the victim exhausted and dehydrated, the disease would often kill within hours. It provoked terror among the Tudor elite since it affected the upper classes to a larger degree.

But despite the devastation it caused over five outbreaks that continued until 1551, there has been no consensus over its possible cause. One possibility was put forward in 1997 by Vanya Gant and Guy Thwaites, physicians at St Thomas' Hospital in London. They claimed it was an early version of a disease called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, since there are stark similarities with an illness that struck the Navajo people in New Mexico in 1993.



The exact sickness suffered by the family has not been confirmed

project, Cardinal's College at the University of Oxford. This fact stuck firmly in Cromwell's mind.

During the late 1520s, Wolsey's power began to decrease. Henry VIII had wanted to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, but it was proving difficult to persuade the pope. It had been assumed that Wolsey would be able to influence Rome and so pave the way for the king to marry his new love, Anne Boleyn. However, this proved not to be the case.

So, in the face of failure, Boleyn began chipping away at the king's confidence in Wolsey, accusing the cardinal of deliberately holding up the proceedings. Fired up, Henry VIII decided to arrest Wolsey on suspicion of treason, taking away his government office and property in the process. This subsequently isolated Cromwell, too, especially since he refused to denounce his former master. But as time went on, Cromwell proved to be persuasive and hard-working and, by the end of December, the king appointed him to the privy council. Cromwell's time, it seemed, had come.

Cromwell's period in Europe continued to stand him in good stead. During his travels, he had come across the ideas behind the Protestant Reformation which had been sparked by the writings of Martin Luther in 1517. Cromwell was fully on board with the ideology, so when it became clear that Henry VIII's fury with the Roman Catholic church looked set to continue for some time, Cromwell suggested a way to severely lessen the pope's stance and power over him. He put forward the unthinkable suggestion: that England break its religious ties with Rome. Having come to understand the ins and outs of the English parliament, Cromwell convinced the king that he would be able to successfully push this move through and thereby pave the way for the marriage annulment. He was correct.

His roles included Secretary of State, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Master of the Rolls, Lord Privy Seal and Earl of Essex

He persuaded Parliament to allow the country's break with the pope and, with his assistant Thomas Audley, he drafted legislation that led to the Act in Restraint of Appeals in 1533, which began the process of transferring the power of the Catholic church to the king. In the meantime, Henry VIII had secretly wed Anne Boleyn who had quickly become pregnant. On 23 May 1533, the king's previous marriage was annulled and the new marriage was declared to be valid.

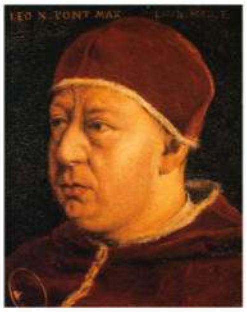
The situation further boosted Cromwell's standing in the country and by 1535 he had been given the title Vicegerent in Spirituals, making him second only to the king in matters of the church. But matters of the heart – or at least the king's – were never too far away. When Boleyn suffered a miscarriage in 1536 and lost her unborn male baby, the king's search for the perfect wife continued. Henry VIII turned his attention to a new love, Jane Seymour, and Cromwell is said to have conspired against Boleyn on royal orders in order to allow the new romance to blossom.

Five men – Sir Francis Weston, William Brereton, Mark Smeaton, Sir Henry Norris and Lord Rochford (Anne's own brother) – were arrested on suspicion of having affairs with the queen who, in turn, was investigated over allegations of witchcraft and sexual misconduct. The 36-year-old 'adulteress' queen was imprisoned in the Tower in April 1536 and on 15 May that year, the Duke of Norfolk

Defining moment

Meets the pope in Rome 1517

Cromwell returns from Europe as a learned, respected and wealthy man, and his standing is strong enough for him to travel to Rome to obtain permission from Pope Leo X to sell lucrative Indulgences in St Botolph's church in Boston, Lincolnshire. In order to persuade the pope to agree, he is said to have played on the pope's love of sweetmeats, laying on a feast which proved more than enough for Cromwell to be handed the paperwork he needed. This clever tactic serves to highlight the cunning and persuasive nature of Cromwell which would endear him well to the royal elite.



Timeline

1485

Cromwell is born
Thomas Cromwell is born in Putney to Katherine and Walter Cromwell, possibly at the top of Putney Hill, close to a notorious patch preyed upon by highwaymen. The actual day is unknown.
1485

Embarks on his European travels
Leaving Putney, Cromwell spends up to 14 years travelling around mainland Europe, living in France, Italy and the Low Countries. He is said to have fought in the Battle of Garigliano in 1503.
1501

Wedding bells ring
Elizabeth Wyckes is the daughter of Henry Wyckes, a respected clothier from Putney. Cromwell marries her on his return from Antwerp. They will go on to have three children together: Gregory, Anne and Grace.
1515

Becomes an MP
Cromwell became a member of Parliament in the House of Commons. He nevertheless expresses disdain for Parliament in a letter to his merchant friend John Creke.
1523

Under Cardinal Wolsey's wing
Now working full-time for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the second most powerful man in England at the time, Cromwell helps his master in the money-generating dissolution of around 30 monasteries.
1524

> “With great energy and single-minded vision, he oversaw a mammoth programme of monastery dissolution”

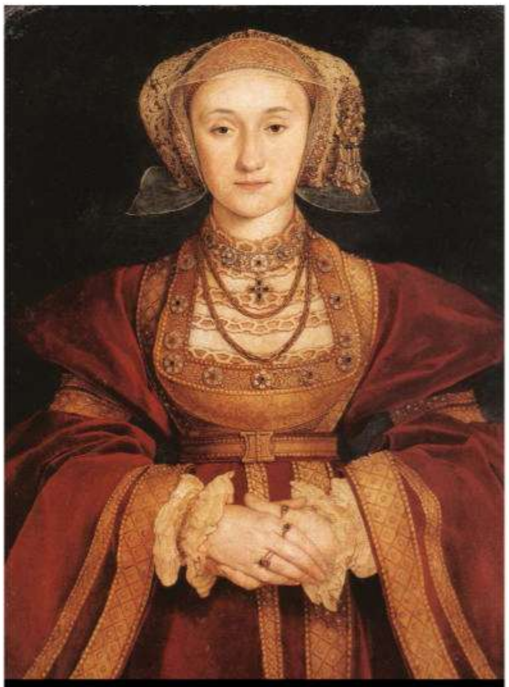
sentenced her and the men to death. Four days later, Boleyn gave a speech in praise of the king. Moments later, she was blindfolded and beheaded.

By this stage, Cromwell’s influence over England was stark. Taking his cue from his earlier days with Wolsey, he sought to bolster the king’s coffers. With great energy and single-minded vision, he oversaw a mammoth programme of monastery dissolution. This was achieved by establishing a network of informers who spied on the monasteries from within, gathering evidence that could be used to order a closure. Priors and abbots were confronted with the accusations and offered an easy way out, often a pension or the promise of peace. The vast majority of them complied; those that did not suffered in jails, were burned at the stake or publicly disembowelled. Sinisterly, there was a ‘Black Book’ containing the names of those believed to be promoting ‘manifest sin’. No one wanted their name to be in it.

Cromwell ordered more than 800 monasteries to be seized from 1536 to 1540 and they were either demolished (so that the stonework could be used in other building projects), turned into Anglican churches or sold. Every penny earned, together with any land and ownership of unsold property, fell into the hands of the king. This pleased Henry VIII immeasurably and placed Cromwell at the height of his power. And yet, the king’s marriage problems continued to be an ever-running theme, only this time it was about to undo Cromwell.

Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell’s great-great-grandfather married Thomas Cromwell’s sister, Katherine, in 1497

In 1537 Jane Seymour had died, having given birth to a son, Edward VI. Cromwell had secured the king a new partner, Anne of Cleves. The king had never met her, so in order to give him an idea of what she looked like, court artist Hans Holbein was sent to paint her portrait and the king, to Cromwell’s relief, loved the result. He agreed to enter into a marriage treaty on 4 October 1539 but when he finally came face-to-face with the woman, he was not impressed. He ordered Cromwell to resolve the situation but, faced with destroying relations between the king and Anne’s brother, William, Duke of Jülich-Cleves-Berg, Cromwell found himself unable to do anything and the marriage went ahead on 6 January 1540. So repulsed was he, the king could not bring himself to consummate the marriage and Cromwell bore the brunt of his anger. The only way for the king to annul the marriage was to admit to having not consummated – which he did, humiliatingly, in court. Cromwell’s enemies rubbed their hands with glee and sensed his protection had waned. On 10 June 1540, a group led by the Duke of Norfolk, assisted by Bishop Gardiner, had him arrested. Cromwell was imprisoned in the Tower of London and charged with both treason and corruption.


The flattering portrait of Anne of Cleves seen by Henry VIII that prompted Cromwell’s downfall

Despite not having a trial and despite having pleaded with the king by letter to save his life – “Most gracious Prince,” he wrote, “I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy” – he was put to death. On 28 July 1540, the same day that the king married his fifth wife Catherine Howard, Cromwell was beheaded on Tower Hill, his head spiked on London Bridge. As if to underline just how influential Cromwell was, though, Henry VIII mourned his death. He said Cromwell had been “the most faithful servant” he had ever had and regretted his execution.

Defining moment

Cromwell seizes control 1531

Finding himself within Henry VIII’s inner circle even though he refused to denounce Wolsey, Cromwell begins to court favour with the king. A plan emerges to divorce England from Roman Catholic influence and establish royal supremacy over the church, with Cromwell using his parliamentary experience to gain the required consent. This will allow the king to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Henry VIII becomes Head of the English Church and Cromwell rapidly rises to power as his most trusted servant. In 1534, Cromwell officially becomes the king’s principal secretary and chief minister.

Anne Boleyn beheaded
Despite giving birth to the future Queen Elizabeth I, Henry VIII is frustrated at Boleyn’s ‘inability’ to give him a male heir. She is beheaded following accusations of high treason.
1536

Defining moment

The Great Bible 1538

Cromwell is insistent the Bible be printed in English so the text will be accessible to all. Henry VIII agrees. Work starts in 1536 and the volume is ready two years later. Large and with a title page that shows the king on his throne handing copies to Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, it starkly shows the displacement of the pope’s authority over the church in England. Every parish is forced to buy a copy and display it prominently. By 1541, more than 9,000 copies have been printed, spread over six editions.

1540

Death of a family
Cromwell’s wife and two daughters succumb to sweating sickness, leaving him only with his son, Gregory. There is evidence that Cromwell may have had an illegitimate daughter called Jane.
1528

Wolsey loses his power
Unable to mastermind an annulment of Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Cardinal Wolsey is stripped of power and accused of treason. He dies of illness on 29 November 1530, aged 57.
1529

Dissolution of monasteries
In a bid to strip the Catholic monasteries, priories, convents and friaries of power, and boost the king’s coffers at the same time, 800 monasteries are dissolved over six years.
1536

Anne of Cleves
Although Henry VIII is rather taken by a portrait of Anne of Cleves during Cromwell’s attempt to engineer the pair into marriage, the king is physically repulsed by her in the flesh. He bitterly blames Cromwell.
1539

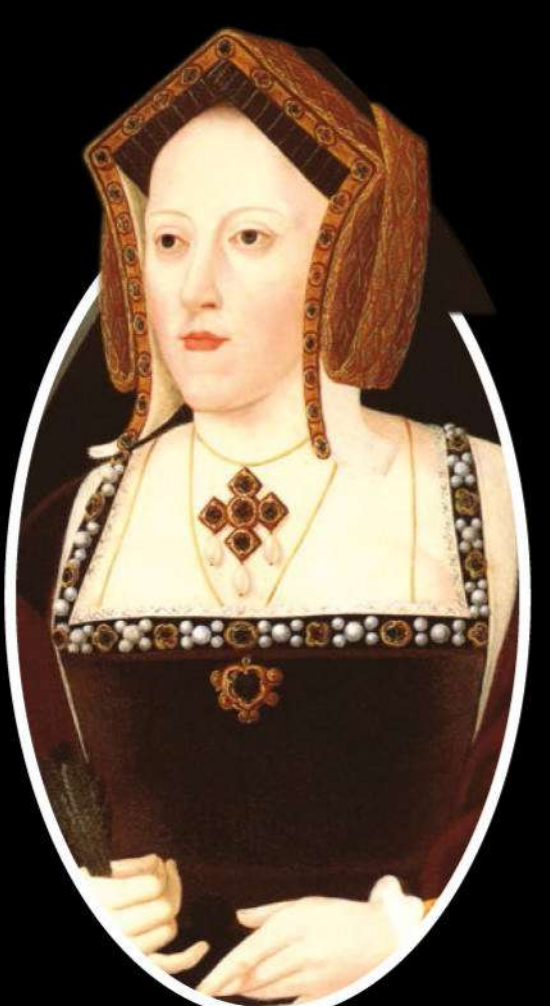
Cromwell is executed
Still smarting over the hoops he had to go through to annul his marriage to Anne of Cleves, the king backs Cromwell’s arrest on a charge of treason and corruption. Cromwell is executed.
1540

© Alamy

1509 – 1547

The six wives of Henry VIII

The tales of love, ambition and tragedy of the women whose lives changed forever when they became the subjects of Henry VIII's affections



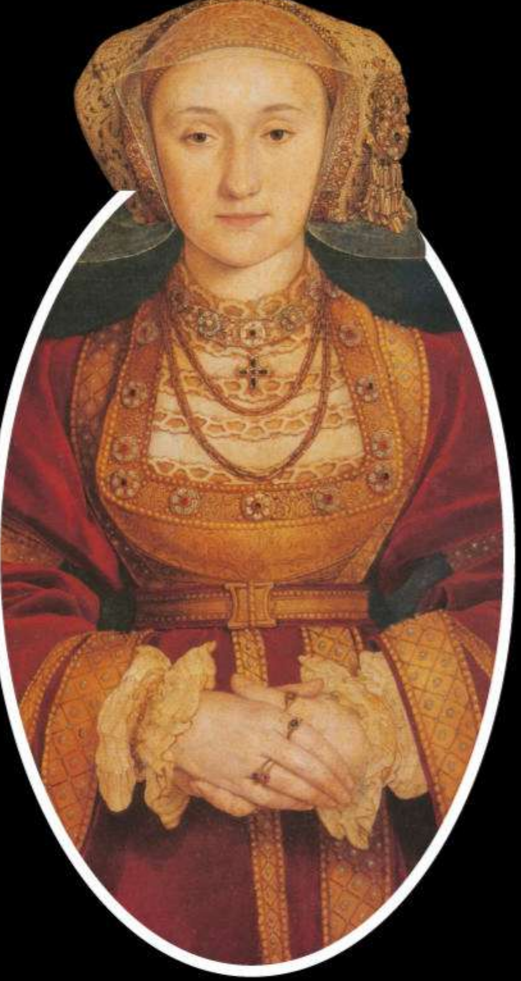
When they came for Catherine Howard, what could have been a scene of quiet composure transformed into one of hysteria. The mask of queenly humility fell away and the desperate girl, just 21, was revealed. She struggled, screaming and begging for mercy as Henry's men forced her on the barge. She knew what it meant. She had been but 15 when her own cousin, Anne Boleyn, was executed, and now she saw her fate mirroring her cousin's. As the boat travelled under London Bridge she saw the heads of the men she had once loved impaled upon spikes and realised the bitter truth; there was nothing she could do. She was going to die.

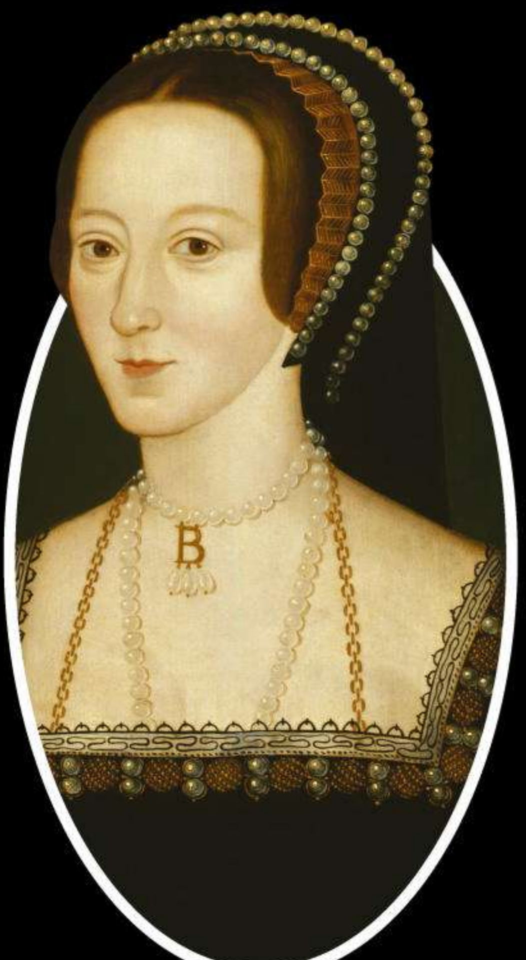
> "She asked for mercy for her soul, then lay her head on the block"

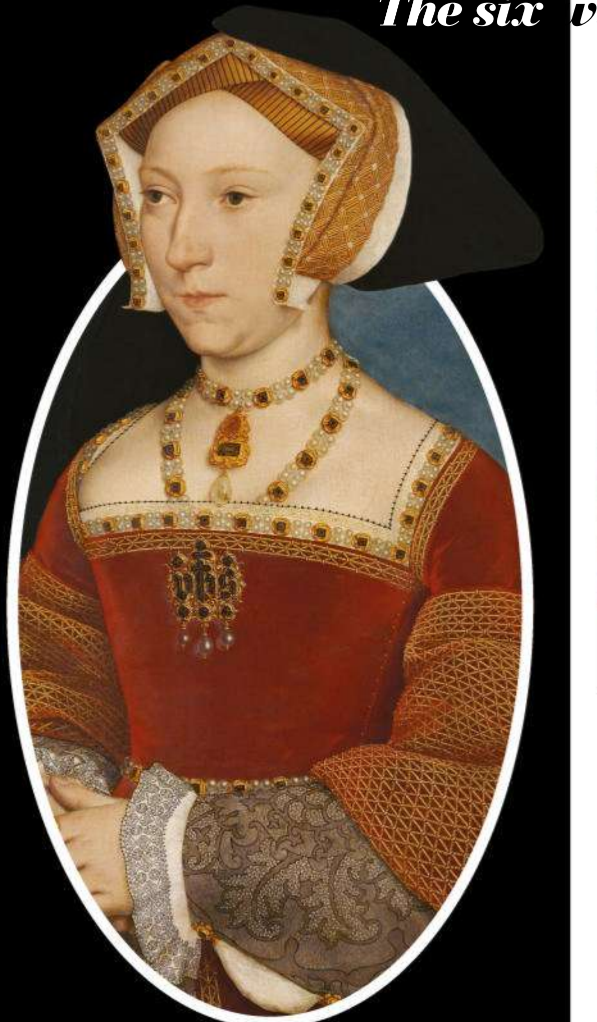
The black velvet gown they made her wear was ill suited to the woman who had, for so long, been the essence of carefree youth. As she attempted to climb the scaffold on the cold February morning she staggered. Her cousin had died with dignity, and she was determined to do the same. But her body could not mask her terror, not in her pale skin or shaking hands. She uttered a few words in honour of the king, asked for mercy for her soul, then lay her head on the block. In a moment it was done. Her reign had been short - just 18 months. Her life was over before it had even begun, the end of the life of a naive girl who had the misfortune to cross paths with a tainted and unforgiving man.

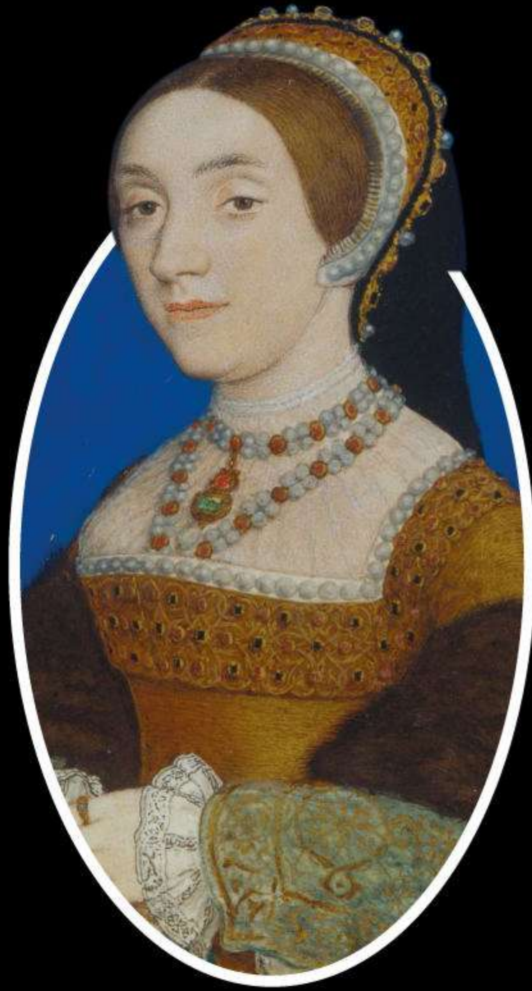
Catherine Howard was Henry VIII's fifth wife, and the second to be executed. When Henry heard of her sexual deviances he, at first, refused to believe it. When he was given proof he flew into a rage so ferocious he likely would have struck her down himself had she been before him. This reaction was not that of a cunning, calculated man, but one who loved, and loved intensely. The king was known for having a wandering eye, but so were many others, on almost all occasions, his marriages had been not for political gain, but for love. Henry VIII was passion and fire, but loss and betrayal had turned him into a bitter king.

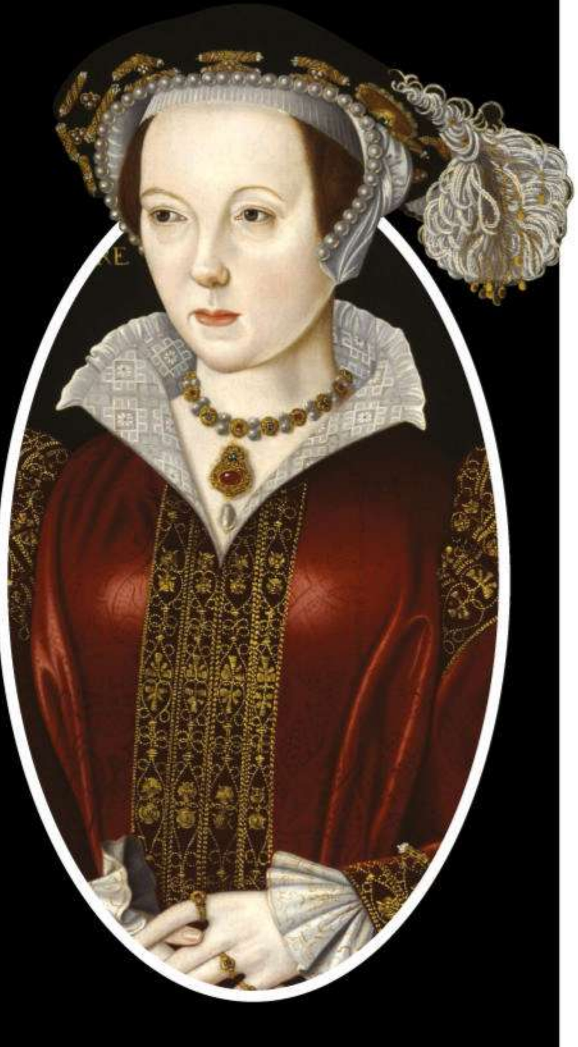
Henry VIII is known today as the serial-husband, the English king who killed and divorced his way through six women to claim an heir. But Henry was also a younger son, thrust into the spotlight by tragedy, who wished to prove his rightful place and solidify his line. Many of the women who became his wives were used as political pawns by ambitious older men. Some of them were royalty in their own right, others were the last hope of a dying family name, and almost all of them had no say in the matter. Their respective fates have now been reduced to a childhood rhyme, but these were real women, with real hopes and dreams, whose lives were forever changed when their paths crossed with England's most infamous king.

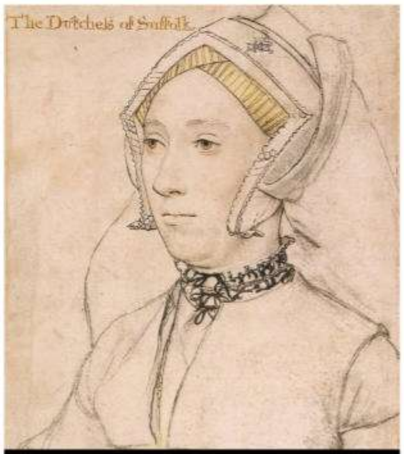












Catherine Willoughby returned to England during the reign of Elizabeth I, and her lands were restored to her

The unconfirmed mistresses

Jane Popincourt

Popincourt was a French maid of honour who had worked at the English royal court as a maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon. It is believed that she began a brief affair with Henry in 1514, but then left for the French courts shortly after, holding a parting gift of £100 from the king.

Catherine Willoughby

An English noblewoman, Willoughby was known for her sharp tongue and passionate demeanour. When her husband died it was rumoured that Henry considered making her his seventh wife, despite the fact that the two Catherines were close friends. She later fled the country during the reign of Queen Mary.

Anne Hastings

The daughter of Henry Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham, Hastings allegedly caught Henry's attention in 1510, during his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. While she served the queen, Henry bestowed her with lavish gifts, leading rumours of their alleged relationship to surface.

Anne Bassett

Bassett's mother was desperate to secure a place for her daughter in court during the reign of Anne Boleyn, but it was Jane Seymour who relented and allowed Bassett to serve her. It is alleged that Bassett attracted Henry between 1538 and 1539, and it was rumoured that she would become his fourth wife.

Elizabeth Amadas

The wife of a wealthy goldsmith, in 1532 Amadas was arrested for treason for calling Anne Boleyn a harlot, and criticising Henry's treatment of Catherine of Aragon. She also claimed that the king made repeated advances towards her, though never confirmed if she gave in to them.

Divorced: Catherine of Aragon

The eternal queen who was stripped of everything but her dignity

Born 16 December 1485, Catherine was the youngest surviving daughter of Queen Isabella of Castille and King Ferdinand of Aragon. Not long after her birth the Spanish and English rulers were keen to make a political alliance, and so Catherine was betrothed to Prince Arthur of England, Henry's older brother. It seemed the young princess' path in life was already set out, and aged 16 she made the perilous journey to wed her betrothed.

The young couple's marriage did not last long; less than six months later Arthur was dead. Catherine, far too young to remain a childless widow, was then betrothed to Arthur's brother, Henry. They were finally wed after Henry ascended the throne. Capable and bred to rule, Catherine was an intelligent and gifted ruler - even serving as regent of England while her husband was in France. The people quickly became fond of her poise, grace and gentle charms. She was also highly regarded for her beauty - with a fair complexion, bright blue eyes and auburn hair, in her prime she was upheld as "the most beautiful creature in the world."

> There was an age gap between the king and his first wife. Catherine was 23 and Henry was nearly 18 when they married

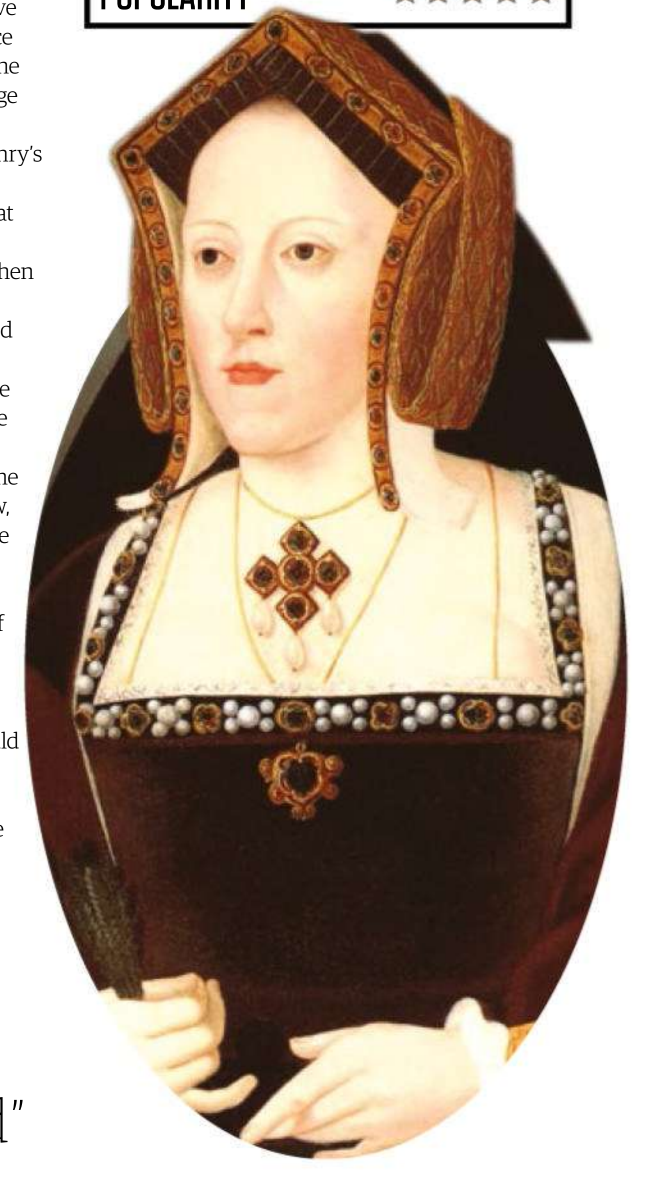
The couple seemed happy, and Catherine found herself pregnant soon after the marriage began. However, in early 1510 she gave birth to a stillborn daughter. As the daughter of kings, she knew that it was essential for her to give her husband an heir, especially considering the perilous political climate in England - a male heir would solidify her position, as well as the power of the monarchy in the country. However, their marriage was plagued by misfortune. The following year she gave birth to a son who died after 52 days, the next child, another son, was also stillborn, and yet another son died after only a few hours. The only child to survive was a daughter, Mary, but a daughter simply would not do.

Henry was frustrated by the lack of a male heir, but it was not until he became besotted with Anne Boleyn that the thought of leaving Catherine became a feasible reality. Boleyn was young, ambitious and seemingly fertile, while Catherine was ageing and, at 42, no longer able to conceive children. Secretly Henry began to seek a divorce from his Spanish wife, claiming that because she had been married to his brother, the marriage was cursed and a sin.

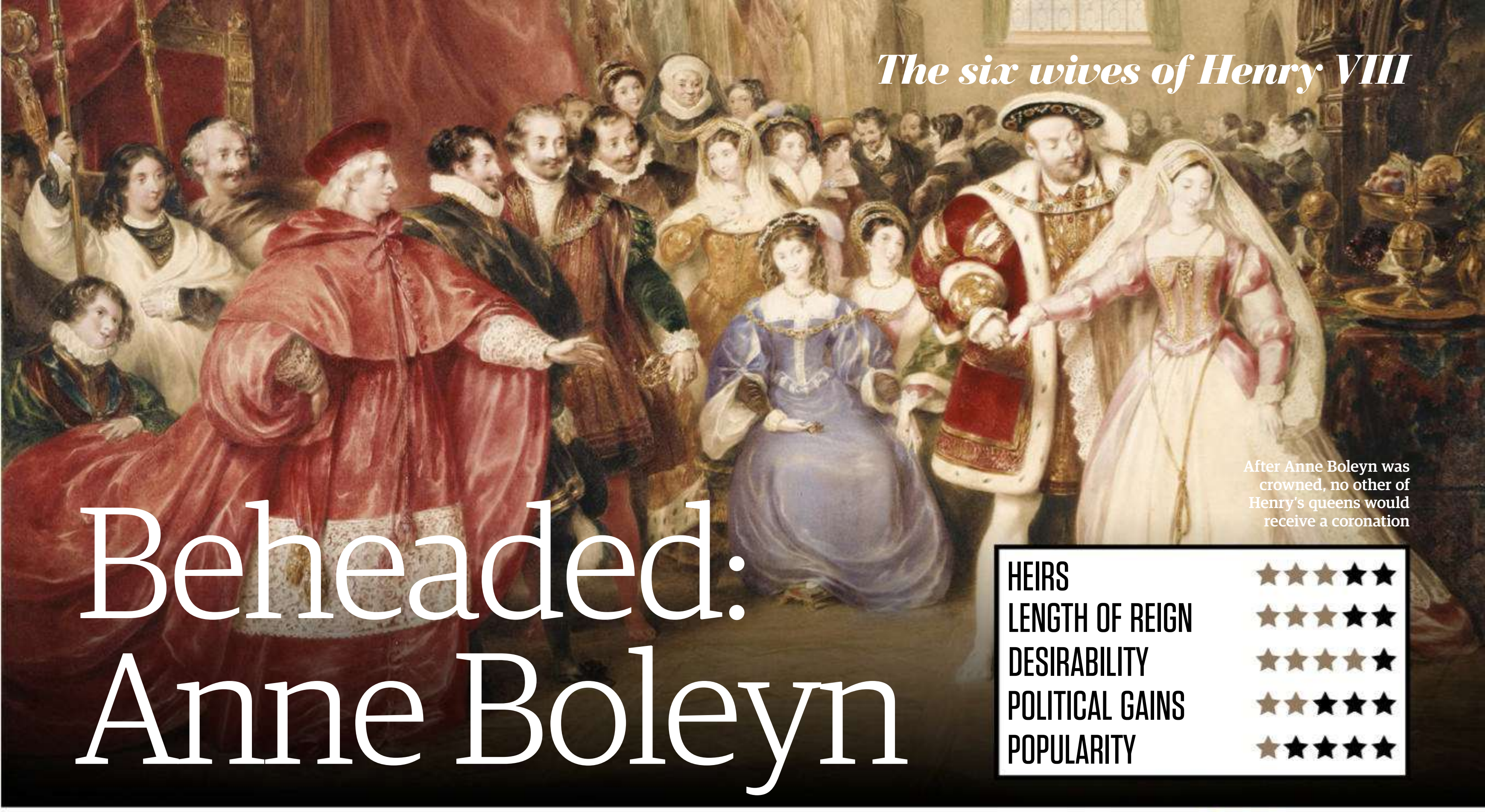
When Catherine found out Henry's plans, she was devastated but defiant. She was adamant that her first marriage had never been consummated, and when it was suggested she retire quietly to a nunnery, uttered "God never called me to a nunnery. I am the King's true and legitimate wife." Catherine pled her case not only to Henry, but to the Pope himself. At that time he was a prisoner to Catherine's nephew, Emperor Charles V, but not even this could save Catherine's marriage and honour.

When Henry married Boleyn, Catherine was separated from her daughter and thrown out of court. She lived the next three years in dank, dark manors and absorbed herself in prayer. Henry, perhaps feeling a degree of pity, offered her the chance to see her daughter if both would acknowledge Anne as queen, but Mary had inherited her mother's proud streak, and both refused. Although she was ordered to renounce her title, until her dying day on 7 January 1536 Catherine referred to herself as queen.

HEIRS	★★☆☆☆
LENGTH OF REIGN	★★★★★
DESIRABILITY	★★★☆☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★★★★★
POPULARITY	★★★★★



> "As the daughter of kings, she knew that it was essential for her to give her husband an heir, especially considering the perilous political climate in England"



After Anne Boleyn was crowned, no other of Henry's queens would receive a coronation

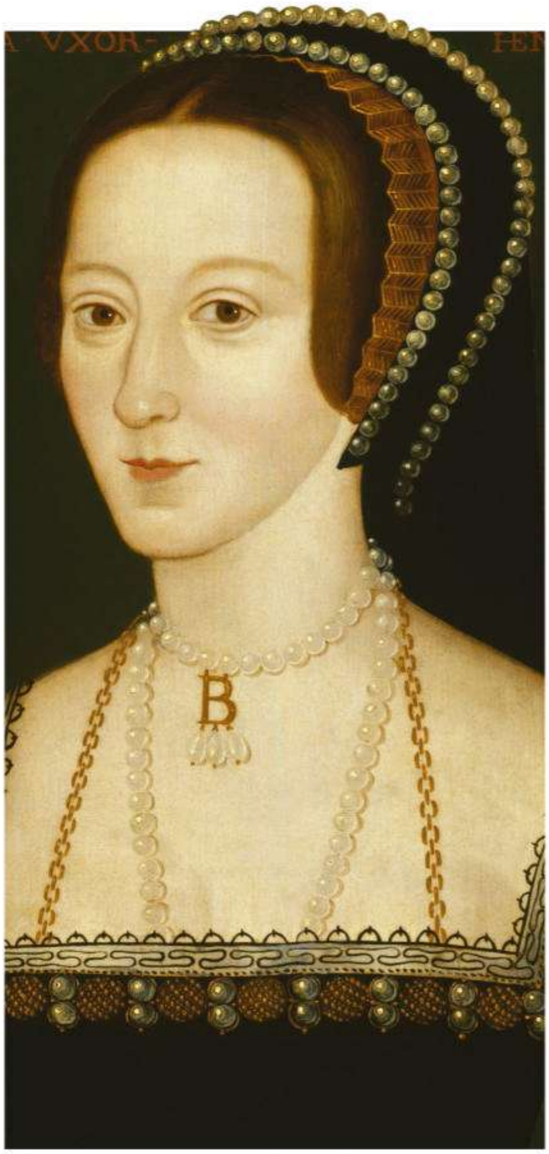
Beheaded: Anne Boleyn

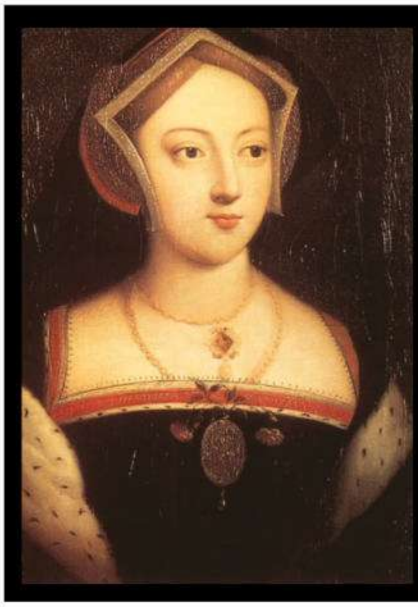
HEIRS	★★★☆☆
LENGTH OF REIGN	★★★☆☆
DESIRABILITY	★★★★☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★★☆☆☆
POPULARITY	★☆☆☆☆

She gave birth to one of England's greatest rulers, but her own reign was one of heartbreak and tragedy

Her name is almost as synonymous with romantic tragedy as Romeo and Juliet, but before she entered Henry's life little is known of Anne Boleyn. The young Anne served an array of ladies, archduchesses and queens. From very early on her life unfolded in the royal courts, and it was there she was in her element. Although not a conventional beauty, she was skilled, refined and determined, and when she entered Catherine of Aragon's service, Henry found her irresistible.

Henry was keen to make Anne his mistress, but she demanded that it was to be queen or nothing. Completely besotted, Henry tore the Catholic church from England to make it so. Although the legal debates of the divorce raged on, Anne made herself comfortable as queen, though the people did not like her quite as much as Henry did. By the time Henry and Anne were finally married she was pregnant. The child was Elizabeth, the future queen, but the lack of a male heir would cost Anne dearly. After repeated miscarriages her enemies at court began to plot her downfall. Anne was arrested in 1536 and charged with adultery, incest and treason. Although the evidence against her was scarce, Anne was deemed guilty and sentenced to death by beheading.



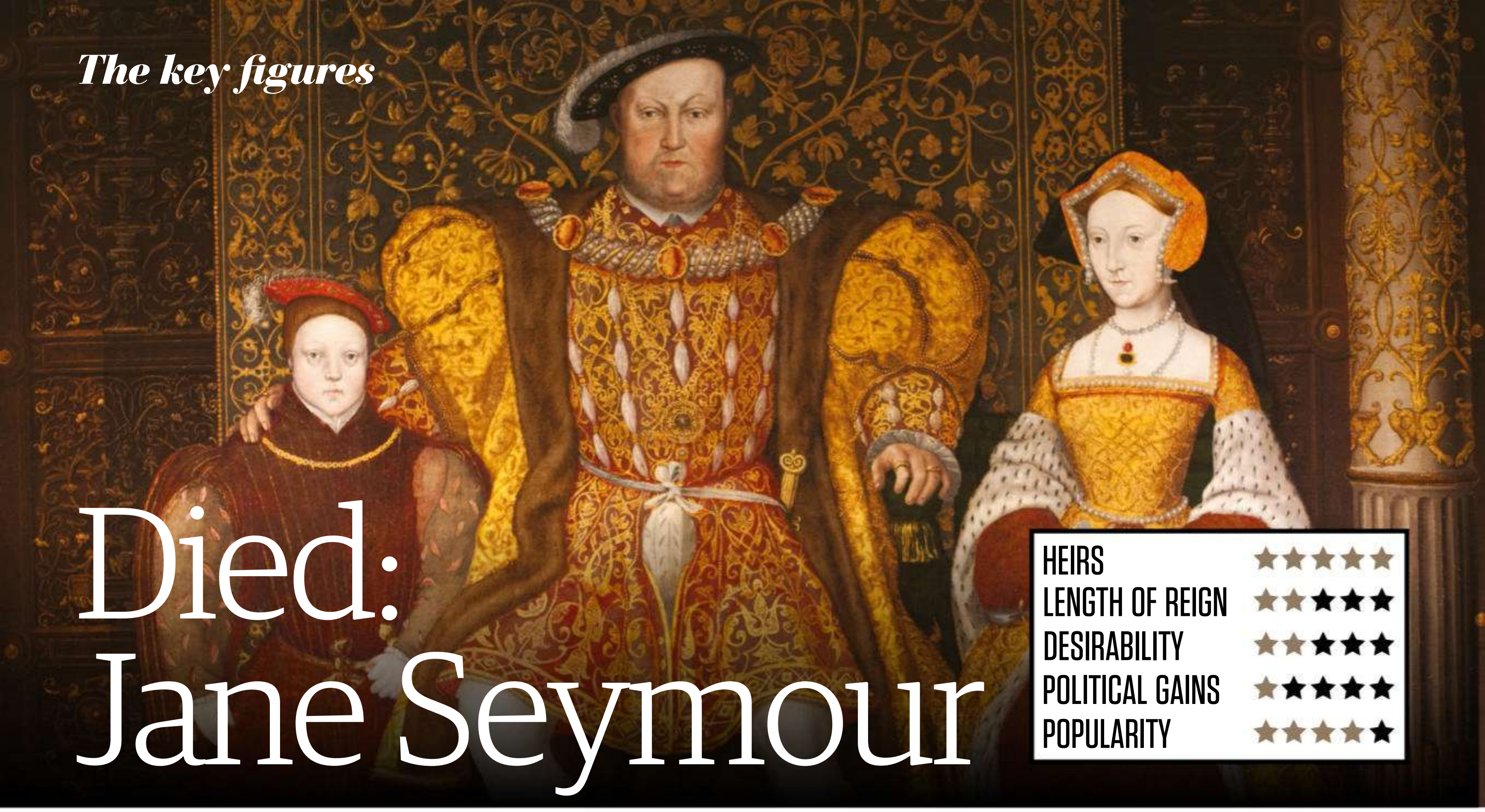


The other Boleyn girl

Mary was the older sister of Anne Boleyn. She spent most of her childhood in England until she accompanied Lady Mary, Henry's sister, to Paris as maid of honour. She spent some time in the French courts, with unconfirmed rumours that she engaged in several affairs, including with King Francis himself. These rumours saw her being referred to as 'The English Mare'.

While serving as maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon in 1520 she married William Carey, and Henry attended their wedding. Sometime around this point, they began an affair. As a result of the liaisons the paternity of two of Mary's children – Catherine and Henry – were questioned.

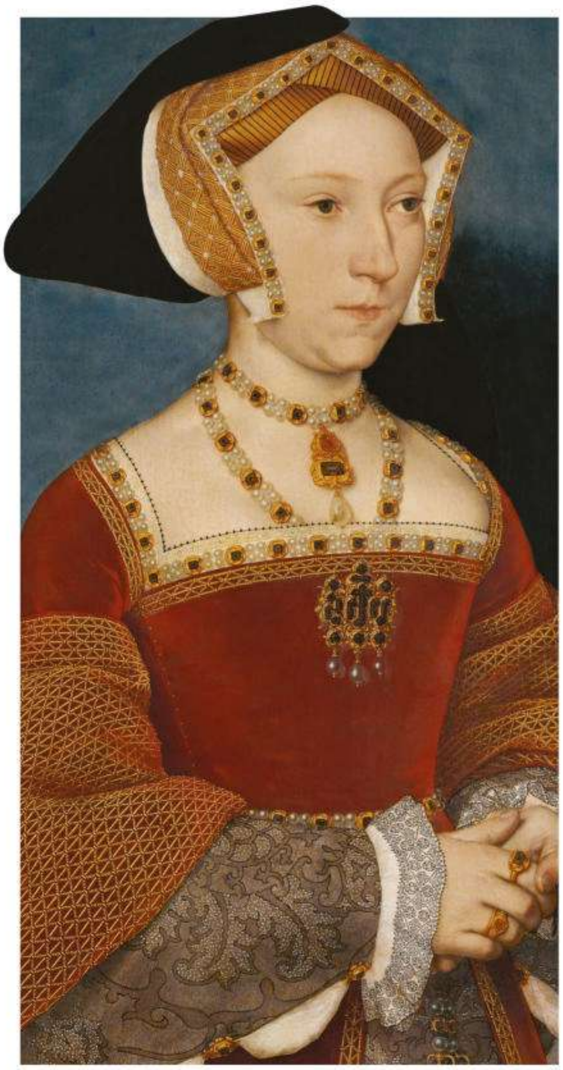
On 22 June 1528 Mary's husband died but now Anne had favour with the king she was able to provide support for her sister's children. In 1534 Mary secretly married a poor soldier – William Stafford. The marriage was viewed a disgrace and Mary was disowned. Penniless and desperate, Mary begged Thomas Cromwell, the king's advisor, for help. It was Anne who eventually sent her sister money. Mary never found her way back into court, but with Anne's death the family name was disgraced. She died of an unknown illness on 19 June 1543.



Died: Jane Seymour

HEIRS	★★★★★
LENGTH OF REIGN	★★☆☆☆
DESIRABILITY	★★☆☆☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★☆☆☆☆
POPULARITY	★★★★☆

Henry's beloved wife, who sacrificed everything to give him the son he desired



In many ways, Jane's background and rise to power was similar to her predecessor's. She came from a respectable family full of ambitious men who were eager to use her as a pawn for their own gains. Thanks to her father, Sir John Seymour's cunning, she was secured a position at court as lady in waiting to Catherine of Aragon in the late 1520's. There is no doubt that she would have been witness to Anne's controversial rise, and when she became queen, Jane attended her.

Jane differed from Anne in crucial ways. Anne was ambitious, shrewd and outspoken, while Jane was quiet, soothing and gentle. She was known for her peacemaking efforts at court and even in appearance she was Anne's polar opposite – fair, with long golden hair and pale skin. It is no wonder that when Henry began to tire of his fiery, outspoken wife, he wanted a wife that would serve him, and Jane was absolutely perfect.

> Part of Jane's epitaph reads "Here lies Jane, a phoenix who died in giving another phoenix birth"

Although it is not certain when their affair began, by 1536 Henry was interested in Jane. Their liaisons were conducted in secrecy, although he couldn't resist lavishing her with expensive gifts. The public's reaction to his affair with Anne had taught him that discretion was important. This suited Jane just fine; she wasn't ambitious like Anne, and she was perfectly happy to remain his unknown lover. However, this wasn't to be so.

Just one day after Anne's execution Jane and Henry were betrothed, and ten days later they were married. Although she was believed to not be as clever or skilled as his previous wives, Jane's known sympathy for the treatment of the nation's beloved Catherine of Aragon ensured that she became a popular figure. Unlike Anne, she was not coronated, and the reason was said to be because of plague in London, but it is also likely that Henry was hesitant to crown another queen before she had proved her worth by giving him a son.

The pressures upon Jane at this point were unimaginable. Henry's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, and possible successor to the throne had died and he was left with two illegitimate daughters. Jane had to produce a son or likely find herself cast aside or upon the chopping block. In early 1537 Jane fell pregnant, with perhaps the most watched and anticipated pregnancy in the history of the country. After a long and difficult birth lasting two nights and three days, Jane gave birth to a son. After 29 years of serving as King of England, Henry had his heir.

Things were not so optimistic for Jane, though. The length and complications of the birth had left her weak and exhausted. On 24 October, 12 days after the birth of her son Edward, Jane died, aged just 29. She was the only one of Henry's wives to receive a queen's funeral, and he wore black in mourning for three months. He also seemed to change as a person; he waited years before marrying again and began to put on the weight he is now remembered for. When he died in 1547, the king was buried beside her – the mother of the son he tore England asunder to get.

Divorced: Anne of Cleves

The mild daughter of Cleves who became the subject of one of the most infamous portraits of all time

Although it is true that Henry did not marry for several years after Jane's death, marriage negotiations likely began soon after. With the split between England and Rome leaving the country isolated, it was decided that a political match, rather than a love match, would be preferable. Henry had agents in multiple countries, scoping out potential alliances and, most importantly, reporting back regarding the women's appearances.

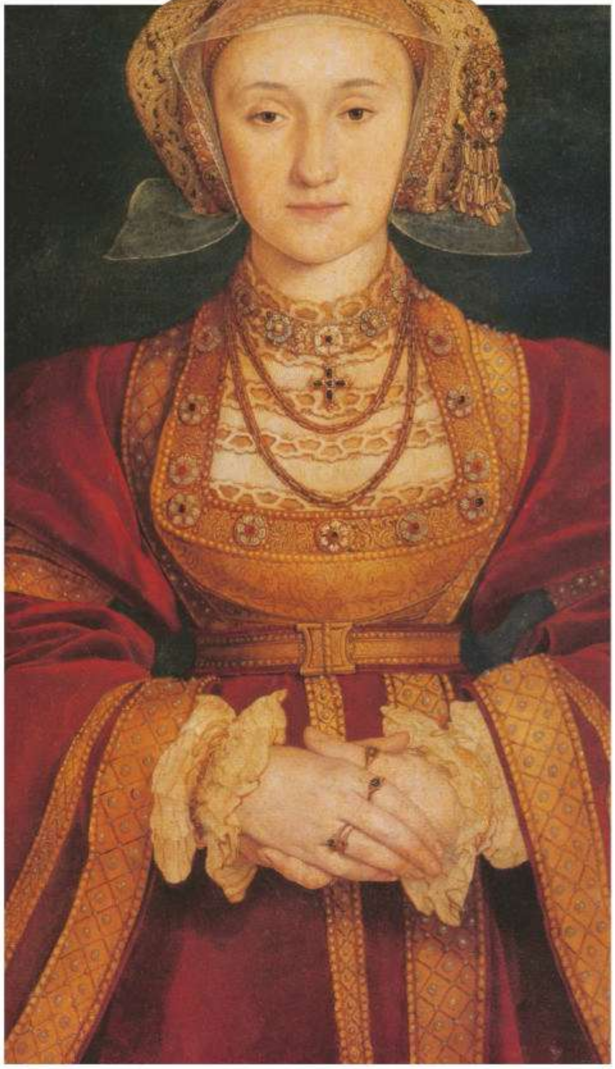
Cleves was viewed as an ally and Thomas Cromwell especially was eager for a match with Anne, the sister of the Duke of Cleves. Keen to acquire a desirable bride regardless of political gains, Henry had Hans Holbein the Younger paint a portrait of Anne and Henry found it acceptable enough to begin marriage preparations.

Anne did not fit in well in the English courts; she was gentle and virtuous, but did not boast any of the sophistication or intelligence that Henry was drawn to. She had lived a rather sheltered life and had more interest in needlework than books. On New Years Day 1540, Henry disguised himself and entered the room where Anne was staying, then suddenly embraced and kissed her. Most likely unaware that this was her future husband, Anne paid him little attention.

Henry was even less pleased with the match. Anne had been described as a beautiful, fair-haired woman with a lovely face, but Henry's misgivings occurred almost immediately, though the marriage went ahead as planned on 6 January 1540. Henry's inability to consummate the marriage on the wedding night led him to say "I liked her before not well, but now I like her much worse." He claimed that he had been misled not only by the portrait, but by everyone who had complimented her.

On 24 June Henry finally had his way and Anne was ordered to leave the court. When Anne was offered an annulment from the marriage she accepted. She confirmed that the marriage had not been consummated and was rewarded for her obedience with a valuable settlement as well as a new title 'The king's beloved sister.' She remained on good terms with Henry, and lived quietly in the countryside. Although the marriage had been brief, she had escaped it with her life and honour intact, outliving all of Henry's wives.

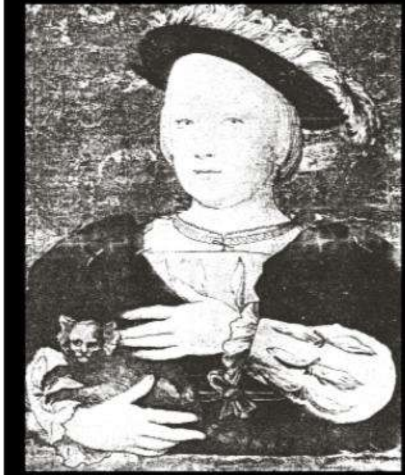
HEIRS	☆☆☆☆☆
LENGTH OF REIGN	★☆☆☆☆
DESIRABILITY	★☆☆☆☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★★★☆☆
POPULARITY	★★★☆☆



Henry famously and openly referred to Anne as a 'flanders mare' and it was his disdain for her looks that proved her downfall

Elizabeth Blount

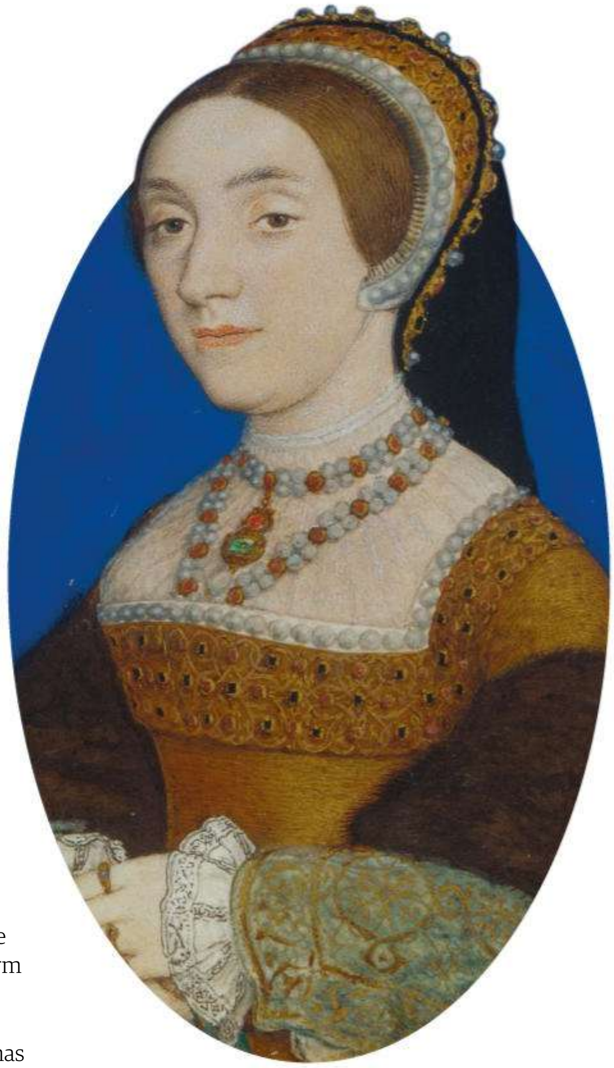
Commonly known as Bessie Blount, since her young days Elizabeth was known for her remarkable beauty. Thanks to her father's position as loyal servant to Henry, she was granted a place at court as maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon. Seven years his younger, the pretty young girl caught Henry's eye and they danced together at the New Year celebrations in 1514. She became his mistress shortly after. Unlike many of his other romantic liaisons, it is believed that Henry's romance with Bessie lasted for years. In July 1519 Bessie bore the king the son he so longed for. Henry acknowledged the son, perhaps in an effort to prove that he could indeed father boys. Although Bessie gave Henry the one thing he had desired, the affair ended after the birth of their son, with him moving on to Mary Boleyn. But Henry did ensure that Bessie was looked after – marrying her off in 1522 to the courtier Gilbert Tailboys and giving her property worth £200 per annum for life, as well as continuing to send her gifts. She had a further two sons and a daughter, and went on to serve as lady-in-waiting to Anne of Cleves. However, due to ill health she was forced to leave the royal court at the same time the royal marriage was being dissolved. Bessie died aged 42, from what is generally believed to be consumption.



Bessie's greatest claim to fame was being the mother of the only illegitimate child to be acknowledged by Henry

Beheaded: Catherine Howard

The fun-loving, effervescent girl whose past loves sent her to the gallows



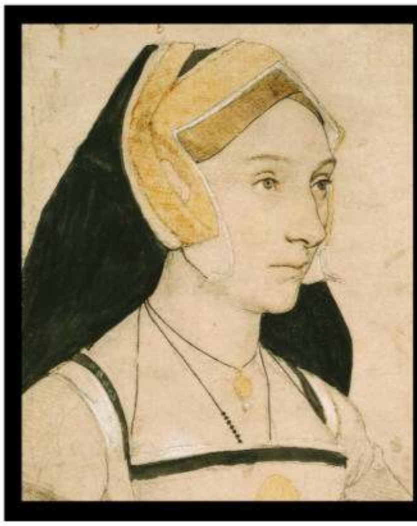
Catherine Howard was the young and spirited daughter of Lord Edmund, brother to Elizabeth Howard, Anne Boleyn's mother - making her first cousin to the ill-fated queen. Although aristocratic blood flowed in her veins, her father was a younger son and not particularly wealthy. Catherine was sent to live with the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, but received little guidance or attention. She spent more of her time with the other girls, secretly letting men into their sleeping quarters rather than reading or writing. She was vivacious and spirited with a kind nature, but had a wandering mind and found it hard to concentrate on one thing for any amount of time. She embarked on a sexual relationship with the secretary of the household, Francis Dereham. The relationship bloomed and they began addressing each other as husband and wife, leading many to believe they had a precontract to marry, however when the Dowager found out the relationship was terminated.

Aged 19 Catherine entered the royal court, serving Anne of Cleves. Henry, who had little interest in Anne, soon took a liking to the young, charming lady in waiting. Catherine was known for her sexual allure and Henry, now aged 49, couldn't resist chasing after such an exciting young woman. Sixteen days after the annulment of his marriage to Anne, Henry married Catherine. She was exactly what the king needed in order to lift his recently low spirits; Catherine injected the king with frivolity and a newfound zest for life, and he bestowed her with gift after gift, dubbing Catherine his "rose without a thorn".

For Catherine's family, the relationship was a blessing and a curse. The ambitious Howards hoped that Catherine's new position would help to gain the influence they had held in the reign of Anne Boleyn, while also helping to restore Catholicism. But Catherine, unlike Anne, had not been raised in royal courts. She was not cunning or even wary, and she found it difficult to shake off her old flirtatious ways. However, her past was catching up with her. Those who knew of her previous indiscretions demanded positions at court to pay for their silence, and soon Catherine found herself surrounded with enemies who knew all her secrets.

Married to an ageing and ailing king, it is no surprise that the flirtatious girl sought comfort elsewhere. It was not long until her carelessness caught up with her, and by November 1541 there was enough evidence against the queen to inform the king. The king, still besotted with his new bride, at first refused to believe the claims but when Dereham and another alleged lover, Thomas Culpepper were tortured, they admitted their respective affairs and were executed. Although she had repeatedly denied any precontract to Dereham, Catherine's fate was sealed, she was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. She was beheaded on 13 February 1542. Unlike Anne Boleyn, it is likely the charges against her were true, however, she believed that if the king was happy, which he was, they wouldn't matter. Catherine was a naive and carefree woman, unsuited for the intricacies of the royal court, and she paid for it with her life.

HEIRS	☆☆☆☆☆
LENGTH OF REIGN	★★☆☆☆
DESIRABILITY	★★★★☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★☆☆☆☆
POPULARITY	★★☆☆☆



Margaret Shelton

There is some confusion over whether Henry's third confirmed mistress was Mary or Margaret Shelton, or indeed if they were the same person. What we do know is that they were first cousins of Anne Boleyn, and served her as lady in waiting. It seems that after arriving in court one of the sisters began an affair with Henry, as is commented by Eustace Chapuys, the Imperial ambassador in 1535, "The young lady who was lately in the King's favour is so no longer. There has succeeded to her place a cousin of the concubine", this lady is later named as "Mistress Shelton." There are frequent reports of the beauty of both sisters, and there were even rumours that the Shelton mistress was in the running to become his fourth wife. The affair, however, was short and many believe it was manufactured by Anne to distract Henry from Jane Seymour. After the affair ended Mary did not press the king for money or lands. However, when her father died the family's financial troubles forced her into a convent. She eventually married her cousin and had five children.

Survived: Catherine Parr

The learned and talented widow who did her duty, then followed her heart

HEIRS	☆☆☆☆☆
LENGTH OF REIGN	★★★☆☆
DESIRABILITY	★★★☆☆
POLITICAL GAINS	★★☆☆☆
POPULARITY	★★★★☆

After the disastrous end of Henry's marriage with Catherine Howard, Henry's strict new laws made the position of queen a very dangerous one indeed. A new clause in the act of attainder read that if anyone knew anything 'incontinent' about his new queen, and didn't declare it then they would be condemned for treason. Simply put, those in the know had to speak up before the marriage or be killed. Ambitious courtiers were extremely wary and the mood in court was tense.

When Henry's affections turned towards a 31-year-old widow, the feeling was one of relief. Known as Lady Latimer at the time, Catherine was the daughter of Maud Green, who served as lady in waiting to Catherine of Aragon. She had a passion for learning, and could speak French, Italian and Latin fluently.

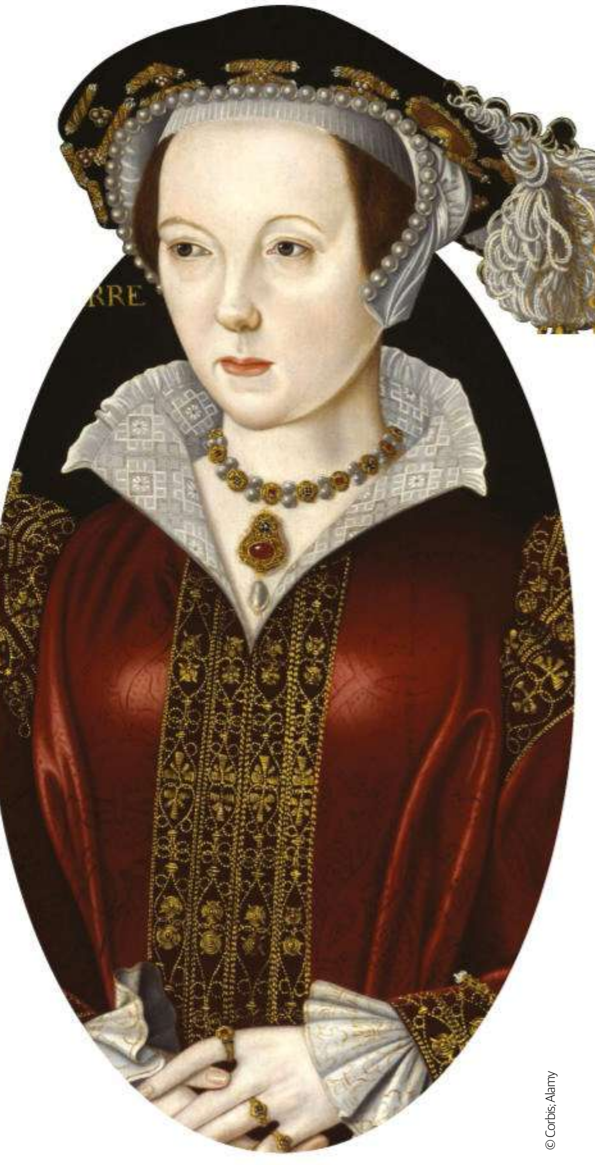
Catherine's first marriage occurred when she was 17, but just four years later her husband died and she was widowed for the first time. Her next husband was 40. This union made Catherine a stepmother, and she was a doting and caring wife for her ailing husband. He died in 1543 and aged 31, Catherine found herself widowed again.

It was around this time that the king's eye began to be drawn to Catherine. Henry was drawn to Catherine's qualities as a loving stepmother and dedicated scholar. Although she was still some 20 years younger than the king, she had a sensible, grounded nature and he began to send her lavish gifts. However, Catherine had eyes for another. Thomas Seymour, brother of the late Queen Jane, had captured her heart. She had served two husbands dutifully and most likely wished to marry the final time for love. But with the king involved, this was not to be so. Catherine was aware that her duty to her king outweighed her own heart's wishes. Yet again she entered into a marriage with a older husband with ailing health on 12 July 1543. The new queen was immediately popular, not only with the king, but with his children. She took an active role in the education of Elizabeth and Edward, and played a part in reconciling Henry with his two daughters.

Catherine ruled as a respected queen. She was the first woman to publish a book under her own name in English, and when Henry went away to France she served as regent. Her capability, however, did not stop multiple courtiers plotting her downfall.

Shortly before Henry died he ruled that Catherine should be treated as a Queen of England, despite her now being a dowager. Catherine, it seemed, had had her fill of royal life. Just six months after Henry's death she secretly married her long-time love, Thomas Seymour. When it was discovered, the union caused a scandal. In 1548 Catherine unexpectedly fell pregnant at age 35, but soon after birth the child fell ill and died. Catherine soon followed her child, dying on 5 September 1548 from the same illness that had claimed Jane Seymour.

Catherine Parr had two books published in her lifetime, *Prayers or Meditations* and *The Lamentations of a Sinner*



© Corbis; Alamy

Henry's illegitimate children

Henry Fitzroy

Born to Elizabeth Blount, Fitzroy was the only acknowledged illegitimate child. Henry was a firm favourite of the king and treated like a prince. He was bestowed with titles and made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Had he not died, he probably would have been proclaimed Henry's heir.

Catherine Carey

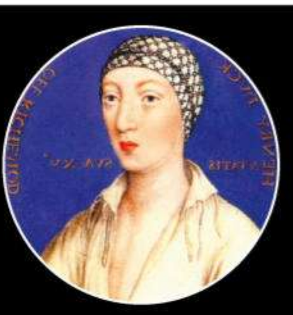
Daughter of Mary Boleyn, Henry never acknowledged Catherine, but Mary was a well-known mistress of the king. Anne served as maid of honour to Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard as well as Chief Lady of the Bedchamber to her cousin Elizabeth I.

Henry Carey

Another child of Mary Boleyn, Henry had an excellent education thanks to the patronage of his aunt, Anne. After Elizabeth's ascension he enjoyed a valuable estate and was appointed as her bodyguard. As Lieutenant General of the queen's forces he helped crush the Northern Rebellion.

John Perrot

Perrot resembled Henry in appearance and personality, but there is some dispute over whether he truly was Henry's son. Perrot served as Lord Deputy to Queen Elizabeth during the conquest of Ireland, but was accused of treason and imprisoned, where he died.



It was suggested that Fitzroy marry his own half sister, Mary

Henry VIII's Tower of Terror

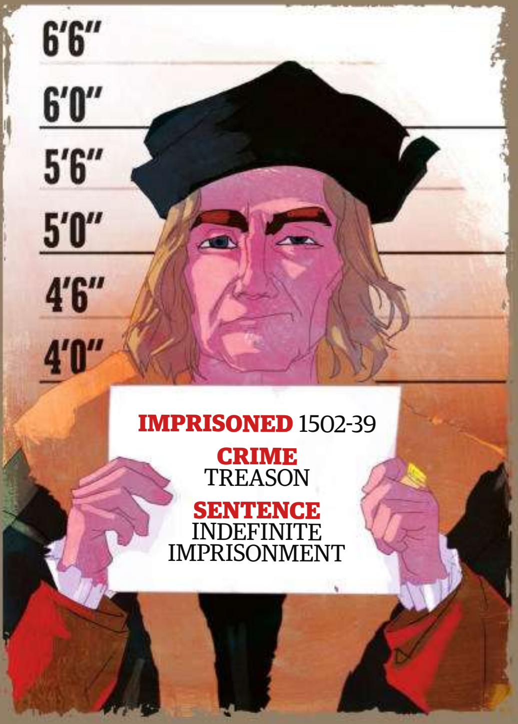
The turbulent reign of Henry VIII saw many men, women and children imprisoned at his majesty's pleasure – and not all escaped with their lives

The Tower of London has a dark legend attached to it – a grim tale of imprisonment, execution and torture. The Tower's forbidding reputation was born in the reign of Henry VIII, a period of unrivalled religious upheaval, bloodshed and rebellion when more than 100 of Henry's subjects found themselves incarcerated within the Tower's walls.

No end date was set for imprisonment in this time – prisoners were held as long as the king wished to keep them, in some cases for decades. Their departure from imprisonment might be heralded by word of royal pardon, or simply by a gruff exhortation to prepare themselves for imminent execution.

Many of Henry's prisoners are familiar to us. Most have heard of Thomas More, and of Henry's executed queens Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. But what of the other men and women who found themselves imprisoned in this foreboding fortress? As Henry's reign progressed, prisoner numbers rose to an almost unmanageable level. Treason, heresy and political discord meant noble and commoner alike found themselves incarcerated here, facing a very uncertain future. These are the forgotten prisoners of Henry VIII.

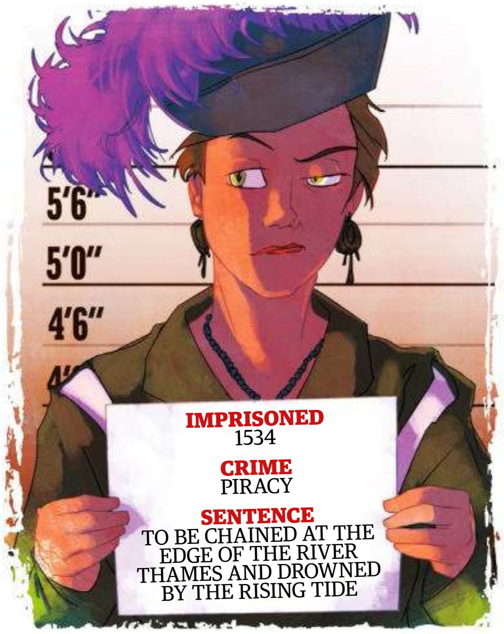
William de la Pole: Threat to the throne



William has the unhappy distinction of being the longest serving prisoner in the Tower's history. Jailed by Henry VIII's father, he remained in the Tower for the majority of Henry's reign. His crime? Yorkist blood.

When Henry VII emerged victorious in the Wars of the Roses – which had seen the Houses of York and Lancaster tear the country apart for 30 years – he claimed to have ended the wars. He married Elizabeth of York to reconcile their families, but he had not ended the Yorkist threat. He faced two serious invasions led by pretenders, and even at the end of his reign there were still many potential rivals for the throne. William de la Pole was one of them. As Queen Elizabeth's cousin, he shared her royal blood. But while William's brothers directly threatened the Tudor crown – fighting, plotting and claiming the throne for themselves – William was not much of a troublemaker.

He was arrested in 1502 as part of a round up of de la Pole supporters and condemned as a traitor by parliament in 1504. Even after his brothers were all dead, William remained incarcerated, more because of what he represented – a figurehead for further Yorkist insurrection – than for any personal wrongdoing. He died still a prisoner of the Tower, after almost 38 years.

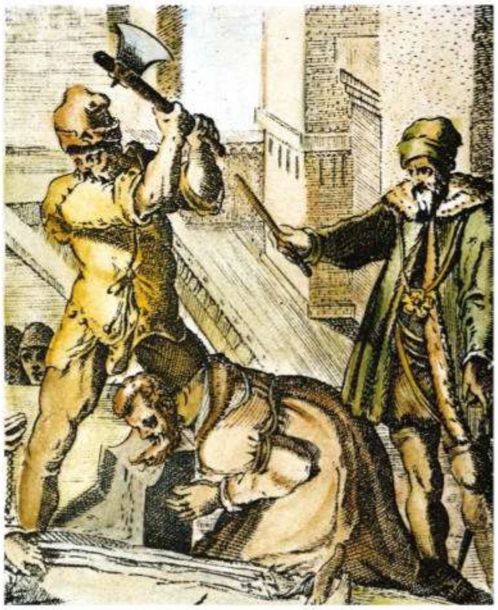

5'6"
5'0"
4'6"
IMPRISONED
1534
CRIME
PIRACY
SENTENCE
TO BE CHAINED AT THE EDGE OF THE RIVER THAMES AND DROWNED BY THE RISING TIDE

Alice Wolf: The escape artist

We associate the Tower of London with powerful, politically sensitive prisoners, but Alice Wolf fit into neither of these categories. In July 1533, she and her husband John lured two foreign merchants into a boat on the Thames where they robbed and murdered them. When the bodies were discovered, Alice and John were quickly carted off to the Tower. As the Wolfs had committed their crimes on a boat, they were convicted of piracy, the penalty for which was a drawn-out death by drowning. It was a nasty end that Alice was determined not to meet.

She was kept within the Inner Ward, the most difficult part of the Tower to reach, but by remarkable good fortune, Alice's jailer was one John Bawde, a long-term associate of the Wolfs. He agreed to help Alice escape, and on 24 March 1534, everything was in place. Alice had appealed to the daughter of the lieutenant to free her from her shackles, enabling her to move freely around her cell. With her hands and feet unfettered, she shook the door to her cell open - it was only hasped with an old bit of bone. The outer door was opened with a key provided by Bawde. Then, disguised in men's clothing, Alice crept to the roof of St Thomas's Tower on the outer limits of the walls, where Bawde was waiting.

As the clock struck ten, they slid down a rope to the wharf below. From there, they boarded a little boat and rowed around to some steps outside the Tower boundaries. Freedom was in their grasp. But as Bawde and Alice walked up the hill from the river, they were spotted by two watchmen. Alice's disguise did not fool them and both prisoner and jailer were dragged back to the Tower. The unfortunate Bawde was tortured for his betrayal and then hanged. Alice and her husband were drowned in the Thames. Alice Wolf remains the only woman to have escaped the Tower of London, if only for a short while.



Henry's turbulent reign

Henry's reign saw nearly 40 years of political and personal highs and lows, with varying degrees of popular support

PUBLIC OPINION

1509
Accession
Henry VIII succeeds his father at 17 years old. He swiftly marries Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon and they have a joint coronation.

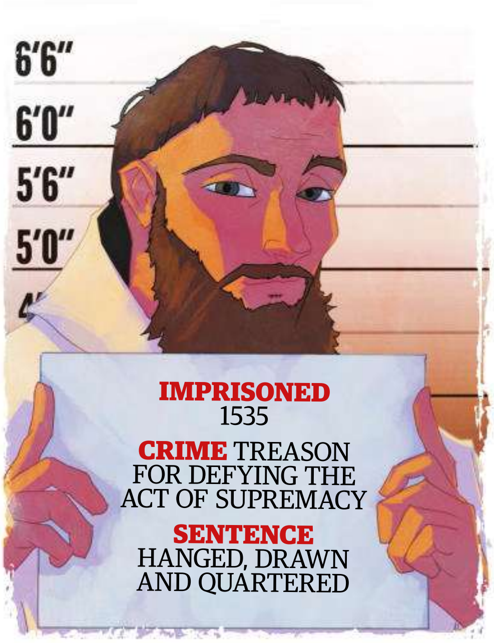
1513
Battle of Flodden
English forces win a decisive victory over the Scots. Henry's brother-in-law James IV is killed in the battle. Henry himself is away fighting in France when the battle is won.

1520
Field of the Cloth of Gold
Henry VIII meets the French king Francis I in the Pale of Calais. Magnificent revelries ensue, celebrating 'universal peace' between the old rivals.

1533
Divorce
Henry finally succeeds in annulling his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and remarries the rather less popular Anne Boleyn.

1534
The Act of Supremacy
Henry VIII appoints himself supreme head of the Church in England. Shortly afterwards, a new Treasons Act makes it illegal to deny Henry's supremacy.

1536
Execution of Anne Boleyn
Henry's second wife Anne is executed for treason – the first time in history a queen of England is killed. Within a fortnight, Henry marries her lady-in-waiting Jane Seymour.


6'6"
6'0"
5'6"
5'0"
IMPRISONED
1535
CRIME TREASON FOR DEFYING THE ACT OF SUPREMACY
SENTENCE
HANGED, DRAWN AND QUARTERED

Sebastian Newdigate: The meddling monk

Sebastian was born to a well-connected Middlesex family and grew up at court, where he enjoyed Henry VIII's favour and was helped to a good marriage. After his wife's death, Sebastian turned to religion and entered the London Charterhouse. As a monk of the Charterhouse (a 'Carthusian'), Sebastian was at the forefront of a propaganda war against the rising tide of Protestantism in England, seizing books and exposing radical sects of heretics.

When Henry VIII insisted on being acknowledged as supreme head of the Church of England, he inevitably met fierce opposition from Sebastian and his brothers. The Carthusians begrudgingly accepted Henry's divorce from his wife, but they would not deny the supremacy of the pope. Henry's attempts to force the Carthusians to accept his leadership were brutal. The prior of the London order was executed in his habit, and his arms fixed over the entrance to the Charterhouse as a warning. Still the monks held out. Sebastian was among three Carthusians imprisoned in the Tower of London in an attempt to force their submission: for two weeks they were chained to pillars, standing in their own excrement. Allegedly the king himself visited to appeal for Newdigate to accept his supremacy, but he and his brothers would not give in.

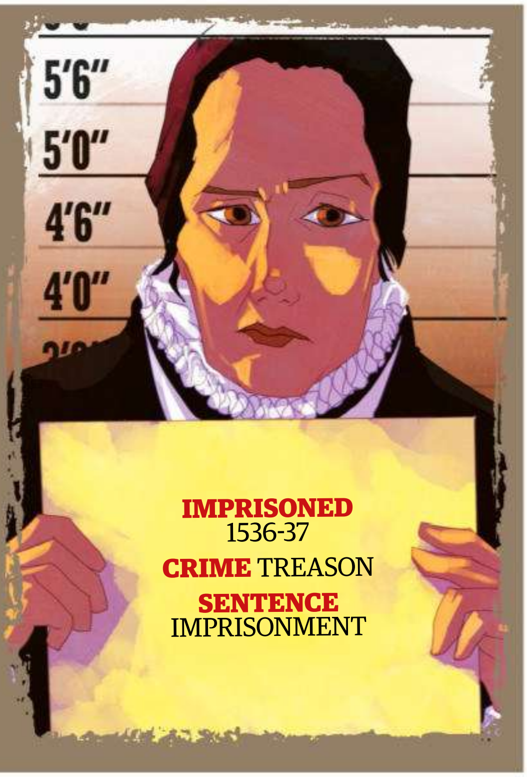
Sebastian eventually met the same fate as his prior, one of 18 Carthusian monks that were killed by King Henry VIII. On 19 June 1535, he was dragged on a hurdle to Tyburn and there he was hanged and quartered.

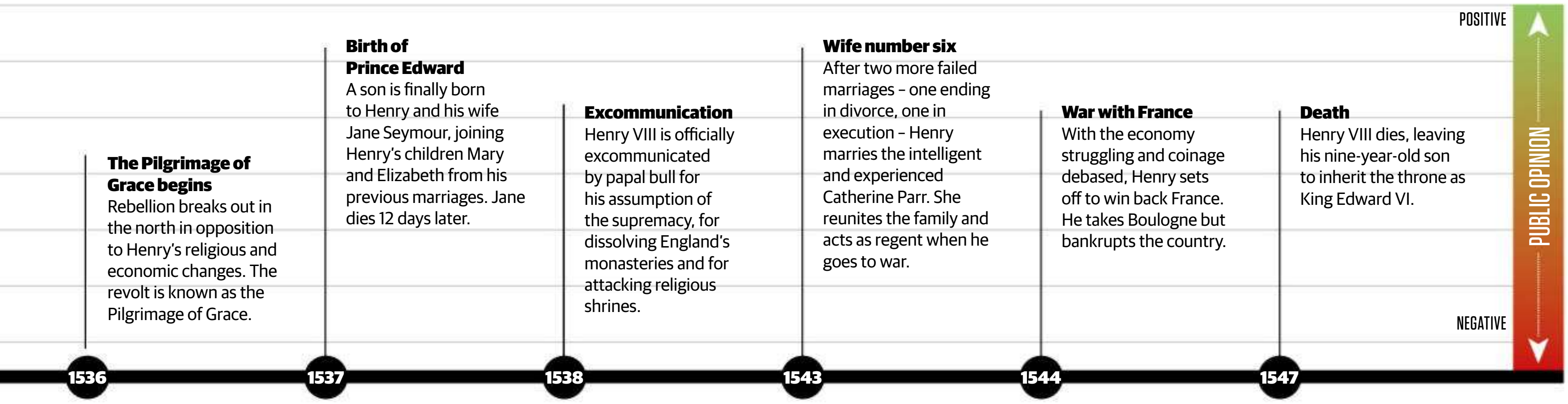
Margaret Douglas: Unlucky in love

Margaret's mother was Henry VIII's elder sister, the one-time queen of Scotland, but her royal blood was to prove a mixed blessing. Margaret grew up in comfort at the English court, becoming a leading light of the literary clique surrounding the new queen, Anne Boleyn. She exchanged poetry with other courtiers, notably with Anne's uncle, Thomas Howard. Their relationship developed into a serious affair with the couple meeting clandestinely in friends' chambers to exchange tokens of their love: a portrait, a ring, a diamond. Eventually, at Easter 1536, they were secretly betrothed. For members of the blood royal to get engaged without the king's permission was a misstep under any circumstances, but Margaret and Thomas's timing was catastrophic. The fall of Anne Boleyn in May 1536 left Henry with a sickly bastard son and two daughters he had declared illegitimate. Margaret was suddenly next in line to the throne. Her romantic entanglement now took on the dimension of a political coup. Henry VIII amended the law so that marrying into the blood royal without permission was treason and Margaret and Thomas were sent to the Tower. There they exchanged miserable poetry about their star-crossed love.

Although Margaret was restored to favour, Thomas died of sickness contracted in prison. It was a harsh punishment for falling in love.

"Alas! That ever prison strong
Should two such lovers separate
Yet though our bodies suffereth wrong
Our hearts should be of one estate"





The Pilgrimage of Grace begins
Rebellion breaks out in the north in opposition to Henry's religious and economic changes. The revolt is known as the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Birth of Prince Edward
A son is finally born to Henry and his wife Jane Seymour, joining Henry's children Mary and Elizabeth from his previous marriages. Jane dies 12 days later.

Excommunication
Henry VIII is officially excommunicated by papal bull for his assumption of the supremacy, for dissolving England's monasteries and for attacking religious shrines.

Wife number six
After two more failed marriages – one ending in divorce, one in execution – Henry marries the intelligent and experienced Catherine Parr. She reunites the family and acts as regent when he goes to war.

War with France
With the economy struggling and coinage debased, Henry sets off to win back France. He takes Boulogne but bankrupts the country.

Death
Henry VIII dies, leaving his nine-year-old son to inherit the throne as King Edward VI.

HOW TO GET BY IN PRISON

Tudor prisons provided very little for their inmates. Here are some tips to help make your stay as pleasant as possible

BE RICH
Unless you like sleeping on beds of straw and eating bread rolls every day, it pays to be rich in prison. Everything from fresh clothes and furniture to servants and pets can be brought into the Tower – for the right price.

BE NICE TO YOUR GUARD
Although he keeps you locked up, a guard is also your link to the outside world. From messages to food, it all comes through him. If you get on well, he might even be willing to help you escape.

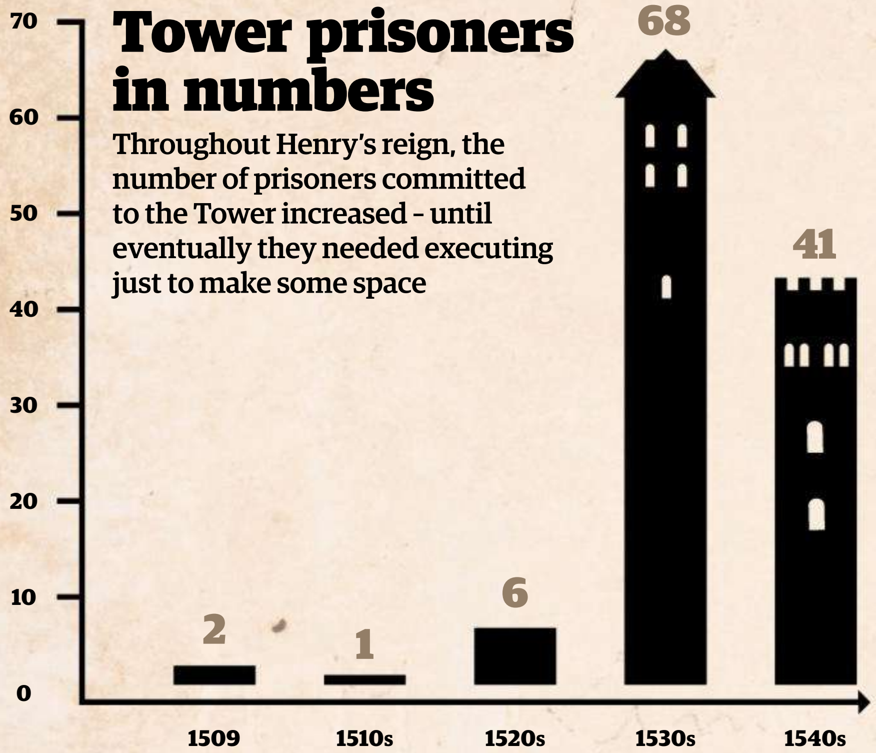
BRING SOME HOME COMFORTS
The wealthy and important are allowed to bring their servants to the Tower – and even their families should they wish. These comforts of home can make a stay much more enjoyable.

HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES
Your chances of release are much better if you have an ally who is close to the king and has a bit of influence over him. That is, as long as they don't also join you as a prisoner in the Tower of London.

CONSIDER ESCAPE
A surprising number of Tower prisoners successfully escaped – and if you get out, you can flee into exile or take sanctuary at a local church. Of course, if you are caught, it'll likely be the death penalty for you.

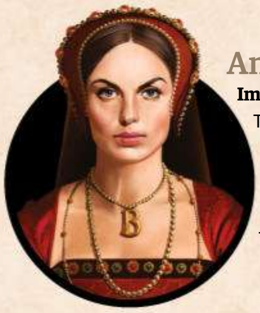
Tower prisoners in numbers

Throughout Henry's reign, the number of prisoners committed to the Tower increased – until eventually they needed executing just to make some space



The Tower's five most infamous inmates

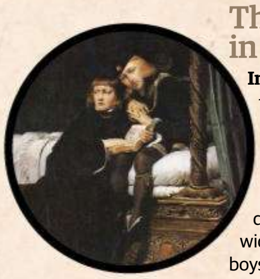
Some of the most powerful and intriguing figures in history have been imprisoned in the Tower of London



Anne Boleyn

Imprisoned: 1536

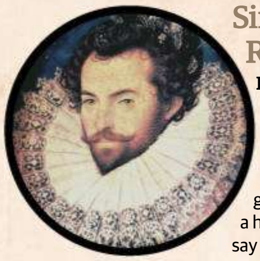
The first queen of England ever to be executed, Anne was accused of treason against her husband Henry VIII. She was beheaded on Tower Green.



The Princes in the Tower

Imprisoned: 1483

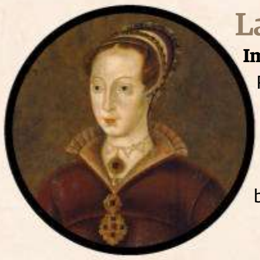
12-year-old Edward V and his brother were brought to the Tower by their uncle. Just days later, Uncle Richard was declared king and it is widely believed he had the boys put to death.



Sir Walter Raleigh

Imprisoned: 1592-93, 1603-16, 1618

Walter lived in the Bloody Tower with his entire family and spent his imprisonment growing tobacco and writing a history of the world. Some say that his ghost still walks the Tower walls.



Lady Jane Grey

Imprisoned: 1553-54

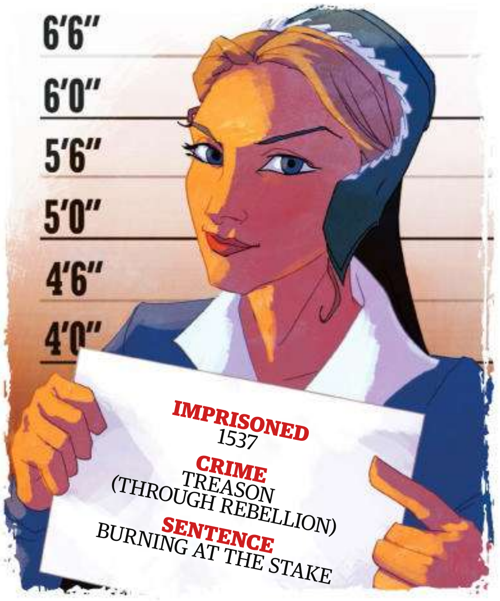
Protestant Jane inherited the throne from her cousin Edward VI but lost it to her Catholic rival Mary I. A year later, Jane was beheaded within the Tower.

Rudolf Hess

Imprisoned: 1941

Hitler's deputy parachuted into Britain in 1941, hoping to end the war. He was imprisoned at the Tower for a few days, the last state prisoner kept there.

Margaret Bulmer: The relentless rebel



Margaret was one among tens of thousands who became embroiled in the most serious rebellion of Henry VIII's reign: the Pilgrimage of Grace. Coming after years of upheaval that had seen Henry set himself up as the supreme head of the Church of England, the rebellion spread from Lincolnshire to Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria. A rebel army of churchmen, commoners and gentry called for the reversal of the dissolution of the monasteries and an end to enclosure and unpopular new taxes. Despite its mass support, the rebellion was brutally defeated and more than 200 rebels were killed.

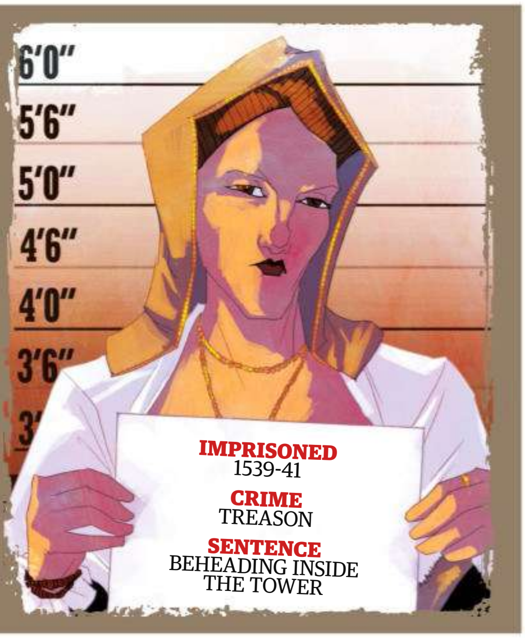
As the illegitimate daughter of the duke of Buckingham - beheaded for treason in 1521 - Margaret Bulmer may have had a personal axe to grind with Henry's government. Her husband Sir John later claimed they had been forced to support the pilgrimage when their home was threatened, but by early 1537, he and Margaret had been drawn deep into the rebellion. By then, rebel leaders were being rounded up and arrested. The Bulmers had three options: flee into exile (an admission of guilt), risk answering a royal summons, or raise rebellion once more. Margaret argued for the latter, saying that to be separated from her husband would be worse than death. Sir John agreed, but their plot was swiftly betrayed and both Bulmers were arrested and sent to the Tower. They pleaded guilty together, were condemned together and were executed for treason on the same day.

Sir John was given the relative mercy of hanging and beheading but Margaret suffered the full penalty of a female traitor and was burned to death at Smithfield.

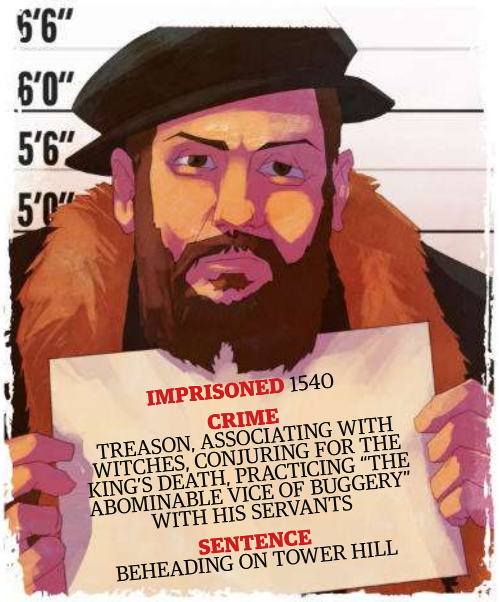
Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury: The mother paying for the sins of her son

Margaret had a long history with the Tower: her father George, duke of Clarence, had been drowned in a butt of malmsey wine there when she was a child. The royal blood she inherited from Clarence made her a threat to the throne throughout Henry VIII's reign, but it was her son Reginald's actions that doomed her. In 1536, Reginald was a cardinal in Rome, and his condemnation of Henry VIII's religious changes exacerbated already tense relations between the king and the Pole family. Margaret had been a close friend and servant of both Catherine of Aragon and her daughter Princess Mary. She was probably as unhappy with Henry's religious changes as Reginald, but astute enough not to admit it.

When it was discovered that members of her family were in contact with Reginald, Margaret was seized. With evidence probably fabricated by Thomas Cromwell, she was arrested in 1539. She was condemned as a traitor and imprisoned in the Tower. During her incarceration, the 67-year-old Margaret was provided servants, clothing and food and probably hoped for a pardon. Suddenly, in May 1541, it was announced she would be executed. "Not knowing of what crime she was accused, nor how she had been sentenced," Margaret went to her execution. There was not even time to bring the executioner to London so, "a wretched and blundering youth… hacked her head and shoulders to pieces in the most pitiful manner."



Walter, Lord Hungerford: Faithful servant


6'6"
6'0"
5'6"
IMPRISONED 1540
CRIME
TREASON, ASSOCIATING WITH
WITCHES, CONJURING FOR THE
KING'S DEATH, PRACTICING "THE
ABOMINABLE VICE OF BUGGERY"
WITH HIS SERVANTS
SENTENCE
BEHEADING ON TOWER HILL

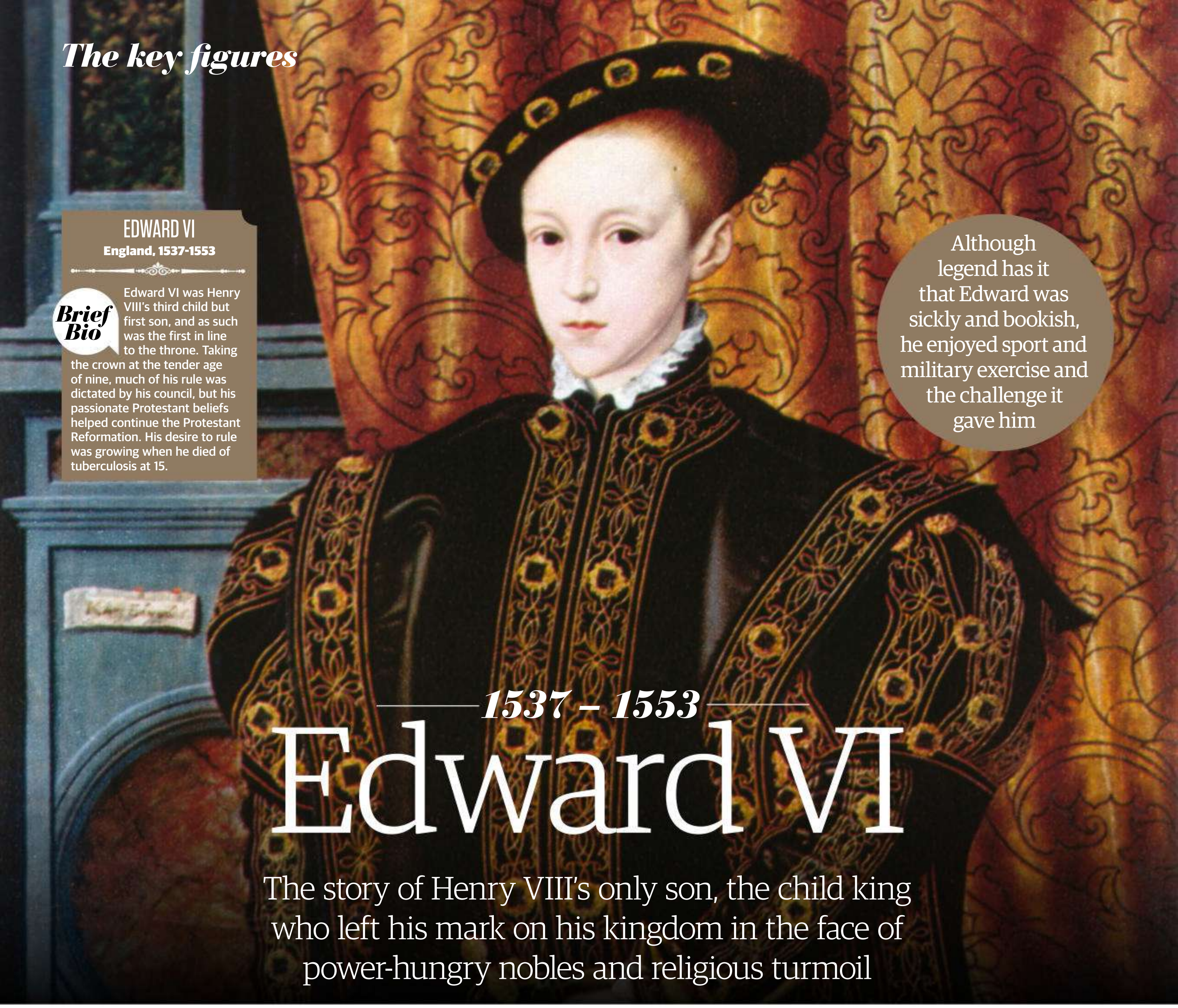
Walter Hungerford's political rise and fall was closely connected with that of his patron, Thomas Cromwell.

While Cromwell was Henry VIII's chief minister, Hungerford's star was very much in the ascendant: he became a sheriff and a baron. But it all came crashing down when Henry divorced Anne and blamed Cromwell for the disastrous marriage. Hungerford's fall was swift to follow. Accusations of "certain grave misdemeanours" spiralled into bizarre accusations about the activities within his West Country home. Hungerford's wife Elizabeth claimed to have been "continually locked up in one of the towers of his castle" for three or four years, with keepers who had repeatedly attempted to poison her. Lady Hungerford accused her husband of wanting her dead because it was cheaper than getting a divorce. She also noticed "many strange things about her husband›s demeanour": he had consulted sorcerers and a witch called Mother Roche to learn "how long the King should live". He had aided and abetted a traitor who sympathised with the Pilgrimage of Grace, and he had been having sexual relations with his male servants, which was a felony. It added up to a compelling blend of heresy, sexual misconduct and treason.

After a brief imprisonment in the Tower of London, Hungerford joined his old master Cromwell on the scaffold at Tower Hill on 28 July 1540.

Still associated even in death, the heads of Hungerford and Cromwell were exhibited together on London Bridge after their execution to serve as a warning to the city's citizens.

© Alamy, David Cousens



EDWARD VI

England, 1537-1553

Brief Bio

Edward VI was Henry VIII's third child but first son, and as such was the first in line to the throne. Taking the crown at the tender age of nine, much of his rule was dictated by his council, but his passionate Protestant beliefs helped continue the Protestant Reformation. His desire to rule was growing when he died of tuberculosis at 15.

Although legend has it that Edward was sickly and bookish, he enjoyed sport and military exercise and the challenge it gave him

1537 – 1553

Edward VI

The story of Henry VIII's only son, the child king who left his mark on his kingdom in the face of power-hungry nobles and religious turmoil

Edward VI's birth was a blessing. For years, Henry VIII had been desperate for a son to carry on his legacy. Catherine of Aragon had not been able to give him this; nor, despite her many charms, had Anne Boleyn. It would be Jane Seymour who gave Henry his male successor, but this triumph was tempered with tragedy. Two days after giving birth, the queen fell ill and she passed away two weeks later.

Despite his pride in his Edward, Henry would be absent for much of his son's childhood, who would remember being brought up "among the women." Much of the familial affection that Edward enjoyed came from his devoted half-sister Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon. Security around the boy was incredibly strict (no one ranked lower than a knight was allowed near him) while an attack of quartan fever in 1541 created a terrible panic. However, Edward recovered, and by the age of six had begun to spend more time with his father.

In 1544, Henry went to fight in France and Edward began his education at court. A prodigious student, Edward's abilities were impressive and he was encouraged by his stepmother Katherine Parr (whom Henry had left in charge of his household), but more serious duties loomed. As Henry's death approached, he created a council to assist his young son. It was led by a power-hungry Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, whose role as protector was approved by the council led by the canny Sir William Paget, ignoring the late king's will.

Acting more as ruler than advisor, Somerset's lust for power led to unrest at court and his own brother Thomas schemed against him by marrying Katherine Parr, attempting to seduce Elizabeth, and literally bribing Edward to win his affection. Thomas's efforts to gain power grew desperate when Katherine died after giving birth and he was caught trying to break into Edward's rooms. He was executed for treason 20 March 1549, another strike

"Edward was committed to removing any last trace of Catholicism from England"

against his brother that the already unpopular Somerset did not need.

The Protestant Reformation had not died with Henry, continuing apace under archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer in the face of strong opposition. Cranmer's introduction of an English Book of Common Prayer and the First Act Of Uniformity, banning Catholic mass, in 1549 led to rebellion in Devon and Cornwall. Revolt broke out in Norfolk over social injustices, and the blame was laid at the feet of Somerset. Into this chaos stepped the Earl of Warwick John Dudley, who had been responsible for putting the Norfolk rebels to the sword. The council rallied to him and threw Somerset into the Tower while Dudley stepped in to guide the young king.

He already had the support of Edward as they shared a commitment to the continued Reformation. He took the title of lord president of the council and made an effort to restore stability. For his part, Edward showed himself to be committed to removing any last trace of Catholicism from England, including mass tables, idols and Latin services. After a brief but serious bout of illness in September 1550, his religious reform continued, creating conflict with his Catholic sister Mary. Despite their mutual affection, their differences were a serious problem, both personally and politically. He sent a letter scolding her for hearing mass and for flagrantly ignoring his instructions; this shocked Mary, who believed that many of his actions had been dictated by his advisors.

Mary arrived at court to plead her case and Edward realised that action needed to be taken. When Emperor Charles V threatened war if she was not given her rights as a Catholic, Edward refused to back down despite disagreement from his council. Edward understood the sorry state his country was in and studied hard to gain a better understanding of its needs.

In the summer of 1551 a terrible outbreak of 'sweating sickness' occurred in London, leading to more concerns over the king's health. Arrangements began for Edward to marry the French King Henry II's daughter Elizabeth but got nowhere, while Somerset schemed for his daughter Jane to take her place. After years of bickering with Dudley, Somerset was finally arrested on conspiracy charges and executed on 22 January 1552. Although Edward held Dudley (now Duke of Northumberland) in high esteem, he took a more active interest in ruling after seeing his previous guardian so violently dispatched. In 1552 the second Book of Common Prayer was introduced.

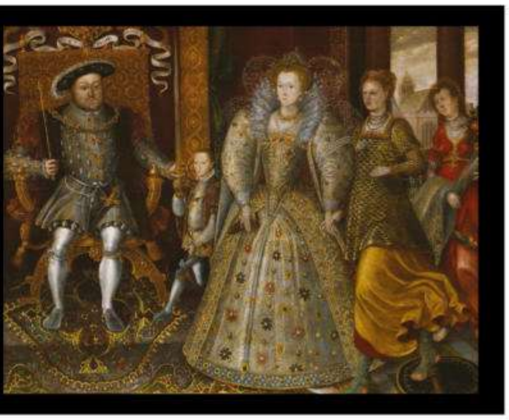
> Seymour was able to buy Edward's affections as he had little money and wanted to give gifts expected at a Tudor court

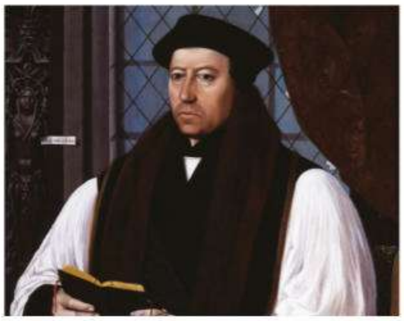
However, Edward's reign was about to come to an abrupt end. In April 1552 he fell ill with what he described as measles and smallpox. The first signs of tuberculosis appeared at Christmas 1552 and by March 1553 it became clear that his condition would not improve. Lacking an heir, Edward began to work on his plan of succession, intending to disinherit his sisters Mary and Elizabeth. Northumberland arranged a series of marriages that would see his own son marry Lady Jane Grey, who had been decided upon as the best possible candidate to succeed Edward.

Edward's condition was incredibly painful and his sickness was protracted, but when it looked as though the judges of the king's bench would not approve his succession plan, he summoned them and warned them of the trouble that Mary accession could cause. After a final public appearance, he died on 6 July 1553. Despite the efforts of his chief advisor and himself, the work Edward had put into securing England's Protestant legacy would soon be undone.

The king's sisters

Princesses Mary and Elizabeth doted on their young half-brother and their love for him was always clear. It was a difficult time for both sisters. Mary's position was perhaps most obviously dangerous, as she refused to relinquish her Catholic faith and was frequently used as the centrepiece of conspiracies, both real and imaginary. Elizabeth's life appeared quieter, but the amorous attentions of Thomas Seymour put her in very real danger when he was tried and executed for treason. However, despite their obvious differences, Edward never believed either sister to be capable of betraying him.





Landmarks of his lifetime

The Reformation continues

Following the death of Henry VIII, the nobility were split between the religious conservatives and those who wanted to advance the Protestant Reformation. Fortunately for the Protestants led by Thomas Cranmer, Edward soon showed a keen interest in ridding the country of any last trace of Catholicism, leading to massive unrest as the new laws were brutally enforced.

The Rough Wooing

It wasn't long before Henry had marital plans for his son. In 1543 he had decided that Edward would wed Mary, Queen Of Scots, and a treaty was signed on 1 July. By December, the Scots had broken the treaty and made an alliance with the French, leading to Henry's furious retaliation, the 'Rough Wooing'.

Kett's rebellion

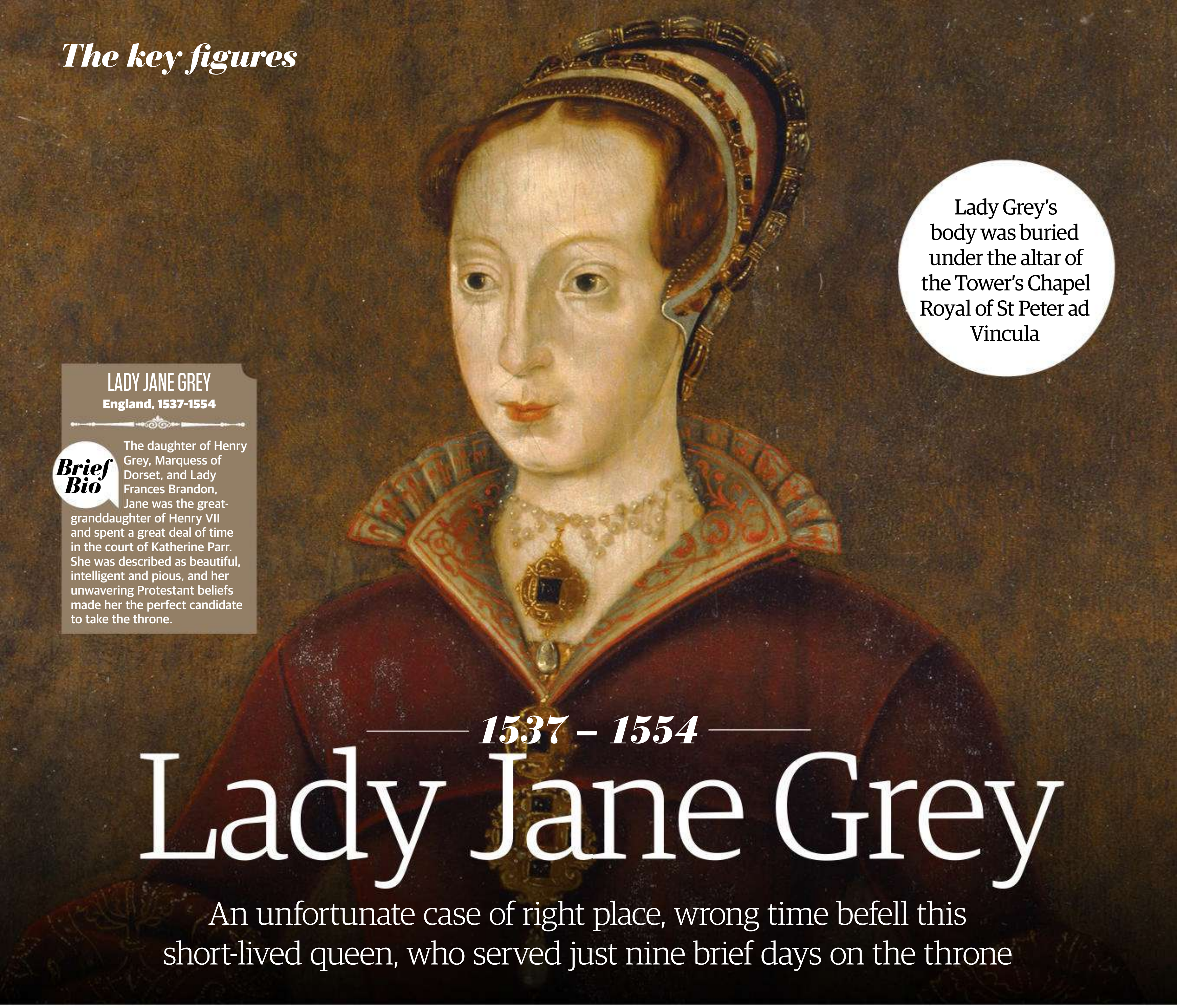
When robber barons took the common land relied upon by the peasants of Wymondham, a group led by Robert Kett marched on Norwich in the summer of 1549. They gained plenty of attention and were soon numbered at 15,000 rebels. While Somerset dithered, it was finally the Earl of Warwick who led an attack with 13,000 men, killing hundreds and arresting Kett, who would later be executed.

Saving Britain's economy

When Northumberland took over as Edward's protector, he realised the terrifying shape the British economy was in. His first step was to debase the coinage, which bought him time, but his masterstroke was in employing William Cecil and Thomas Gresham, who convinced wealthy trading companies in London to help support the national debt, before travelling to the Netherlands to work the stock market. By 1552, the economy had been restored.

Sweating sickness ravages Europe

The sickness that swept across England and Europe caused widespread panic. It was first seen in 1485 before recurring several times before the end of the 15th century. 1528 saw the most serious outbreak in years and Henry VIII was evacuated from London as a result. Its causes were unknown and it wasted no time destroying its host body. Even if you survived it, there was no guarantee that you would not suffer from it again.



Lady Grey's body was buried under the altar of the Tower's Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula

LADY JANE GREY
England, 1537-1554

Brief Bio

The daughter of Henry Grey, Marquess of Dorset, and Lady Frances Brandon, Jane was the great-granddaughter of Henry VII and spent a great deal of time in the court of Katherine Parr. She was described as beautiful, intelligent and pious, and her unwavering Protestant beliefs made her the perfect candidate to take the throne.

1537 – 1554

Lady Jane Grey

An unfortunate case of right place, wrong time befell this short-lived queen, who served just nine brief days on the throne

Jane Grey's tumultuous encounter with the throne began when she was just nine years old. Jane had always inhabited a place at the edges of the court, but it was not until she was nine that she entered the court of Katherine Parr, Henry VIII's surviving wife, in spring 1547. Her father became Duke of Suffolk and the influence of the Protestant, academic court moulded the already intelligent Jane (who at such a young age, could already speak and write Latin and Greek) into a devoted religious scholar.

This intense intelligence and fierce religious fervour made Jane seem mature beyond her years, but it did not mean she was not vulnerable to the Machiavellian figures who prowled the court pursuing their own agendas. Katherine's new husband Thomas Seymour, one of Edward VI's maternal uncles, planned to marry her to the young king himself. However, when Seymour was beheaded for 33 counts of treason after an alleged plot to kidnap Edward VI, the plan was foiled. Jane returned to her true love, her studies, at Bradgate house, her childhood home.

An advantageous marriage was still inevitable for Jane and, soon enough, another suitor appeared in the strapping form of young Lord Guildford Dudley. The son of Edward VI's lord president the Duke of Northumberland (who would consolidate his power by arranging a successful marriage), Guildford's high birth and position of influence weren't enough to sway Jane. She was adamant that she didn't want to marry him, until her parents forcefully persuaded her. According to them, this was an opportunity too good to miss: despite Guildford's young, petulant and spoilt attitude, how could she spurn the chance to consolidate her claim to the throne, continuing the Protestant line that the dying Edward VI was so keen to preserve?

On 25 May 1553 Jane and Guildford were married at Durham House, London. Guildford was pleased that his attempt at the crown was in motion, and Jane went back to her parents' London home. The duchess of Northumberland was impatient, though, and convinced Jane that she should prepare herself to be crowned.

When Edward VI died on 6 July, Jane was recovering at the royal manor in Chelsea from an illness that she was convinced was a result of poisoning. It was a paranoid start to what would be a fateful fortnight for the prospective queen. One of Northumberland's daughters informed Jane that she had been chosen by Edward VI as his successor, and she was reportedly so shocked by the news that she fell to the ground weeping, declaring her own "insufficiency", but praying that if the position was "rightfully and lawfully" hers, that she would be granted "grace to govern the realm to his [God's] glory and service."

Far from a distressed and fragile girl, Jane pressed on with resolve. She recovered from her illness and the very next day processed in state down the river Thames to the Tower, with Guildford eagerly by her side. No matter how much he insisted, Jane was adamant that she would not proclaim him king, reputedly quipping that "the crown is not a plaything for boys and girls."

Jane later wrote that this was the moment when she realised the extent to which her marriage had been a fraud. The persuasion from Northumberland, bullying from her mother and father – it had all been in pursuit of the crown for Northumberland and son. She held her position steadfastly in the face of the family argument that ensued and she refused to concede the crown to her husband.

Jane was proclaimed queen at the Cross in Cheapside, while Bishop Ridley of London supported her rightful claim to the throne in a sermon at St Paul's Cross. It should have been a jovial time, but the mood was unusually subdued. The accession was recorded and proclaimed across the kingdom, but there was no rejoicing. It was clear that trouble was brewing.

Residing at the Tower of London to prepare for her coronation, Jane was unaware that it would soon become her prison. By 12 July news arrived that Princess Mary was prepared to put up a fight for the throne. She had gathered support in East Anglia and the country's Catholics were readying themselves to stand with her. Jane's father, Duke of Suffolk, planned to suppress the rebellion in East Anglia, but Jane wouldn't let him leave her side and so Northumberland was sent in his stead.

Northumberland was at his lowest ebb, lacking supporters and being out of general favour. He failed in his mission and was brought back to the Tower as a prisoner. The tide had turned on Jane and the crown was now Mary's for the taking. Three days later, Mary was proclaimed queen throughout the country.

At first, Mary would not allow Jane to be executed, driven by her conscience to keep the girl alive. Jane spent a month in comfortable residence with the Tower's gentleman jailer, Partridge, who afforded her dignity and treated her with respect. All seemed well considering the tumultuous events before, and Jane was grateful to Mary for sparing her life. When Jane and Guildford were tried for treason on 19 November, they were condemned, but both their lives spared.

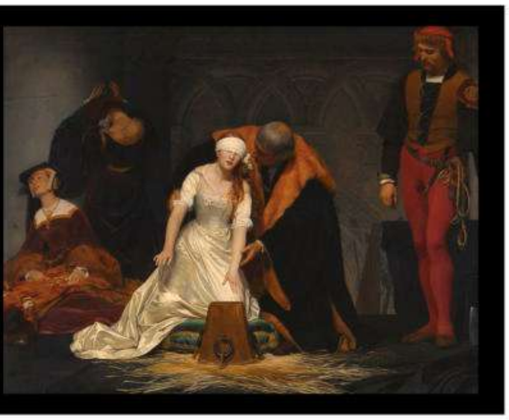
In early 1554, however, came Thomas Wyatt's rebellion. Jane's father foolishly joined the rebel ranks against the marriage of Mary and Philip of Spain and, in the process, gave Mary and her supporters a reason to suspect his motives and fear once again the threat of his daughter as the 'past queen'.

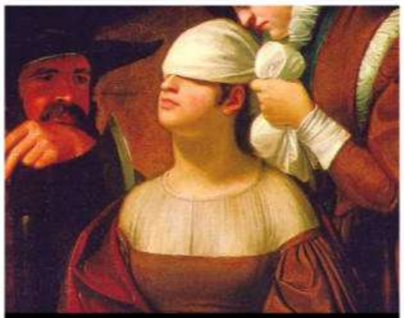
With this act of rebellion, Suffolk sealed his daughter's fate. On 12 February 1554, Jane waited until she had seen the disembodied head of her husband pass in a cart to face her own execution. She was led to the yard on the arm of the Tower's lieutenant, steely-faced and composed. Upon the erected scaffold, she spoke to the gathered crowd, imploring them to recognise her as a good Christian woman, and to pray for her while she was still alive. She was given a handkerchief to cover her eyes, and she fumbled to find the block in her panic. With one swift blow to the neck, Jane and her dalliance with the throne were finished.

She was named after Jane Seymour, wife of her great-uncle Henry VIII and mother of Edward VI

The nine days queen

Less than 24 hours into her nine-day reign, Jane was visited by the lord treasurer, bringing her a selection of jewels. When she was presented with the crown for resizing, she hesitated: there would be no turning back once it was on her head. Jane herself sent for 20 yards of velvet, 25 ells (a contemporary unit of measurement) of fine Holland linen and 33 ells of lining material. What she did not do, however, was make herself known to the people. When Mary became queen, Jane did not protest or rebel – proof, perhaps, that she never wanted the burden of the role that had been forced upon her.





Blindfolded at her execution, Jane struggled to find the block on which to lay her head

Landmarks of Jane's lifetime

16th-century education

Education was not compulsory in the 16th century, but was an integral part of life for royalty and privileged members of society. Jane's education was particularly thorough, covering Latin, French, Greek and Italian, as well as needlework, music and philosophy. She was known to be studious and particularly pious, which was part of what made her an attractive claimant to the throne.

A legitimate claim

Confusion was placed over the next in line to the throne, as both Mary and Elizabeth had been declared illegitimate by Parliament in 1536. When Mary did take the throne, she passed an act overturning the declaration, and so legitimised herself. Elizabeth, however, never did so.

Wyatt's rebellion

Jane was considerately treated in the tower until her father sealed her fate by joining Wyatt's rebellion. The rebellion was led by nobles, including Wyatt, who was from Kent. The rebellion was in response to the marriage of Mary I to Philip of Spain, as the nobles feared that the Spanish influence would seep into Mary's rule, but without the support of the people, the rebellion failed.

An obsession with time

Jane Grey reportedly had a fondness for clocks and watches, as shown by the number of timepieces delivered to her while she was in the Tower. Many of these were incredibly ornate, including one described as being of "sable skin with a head of gold, containing in it a clock, with a collar of gold, enamelled black, set with four diamonds, and four rubies." Watches had been in use since around the 1520s, worn at the belt by wealthy women.

The first queen?

There are three women in contention for the title of 'first female ruler of Britain', and Jane is one. Some argue that the 12th century's Empress Matilda, daughter of Henry I, was the first, though she was never crowned. Others give the title to Mary I, perhaps due to the brevity of Jane's reign. Indeed, Mary was first to reign in her own right, but the fact remains that Jane was the first queen crowned.

1516 – 1558

Mary I

The first legitimate queen regnant of England, Mary was a devout Catholic whose love for her nation became lost in a bloody legacy

MARY I

England, 1516-1558

Brief Bio

Few monarchs are quite as notorious as Henry VIII's eldest daughter. Raised as a devout Roman Catholic, her faith burned hot during the religious upheaval of the Reformation, leading to a purge of beheadings and burnings when she finally took the crown. Yet despite the 'Bloody' moniker, Mary was a complicated woman.

Of all the dynasties to rule over England and its territories, few were as varied and impactful as the house of Tudor. Mary I, the first English queen to reign in her own right, was no exception. The eldest daughter of Henry VIII, she was defined by the turbulent religious metamorphosis England experienced in the early 1500s. In a time when religion and politics were inextricably intertwined, Mary would become a monarch so driven by her beliefs that she would murder hundreds of her own subjects in order to restore the sanctity of her own realm. But who was the woman behind the name 'Bloody Mary'? Was she really a bloodthirsty tyrant? Or was she a product of a country divided by the distinctions of its faith?

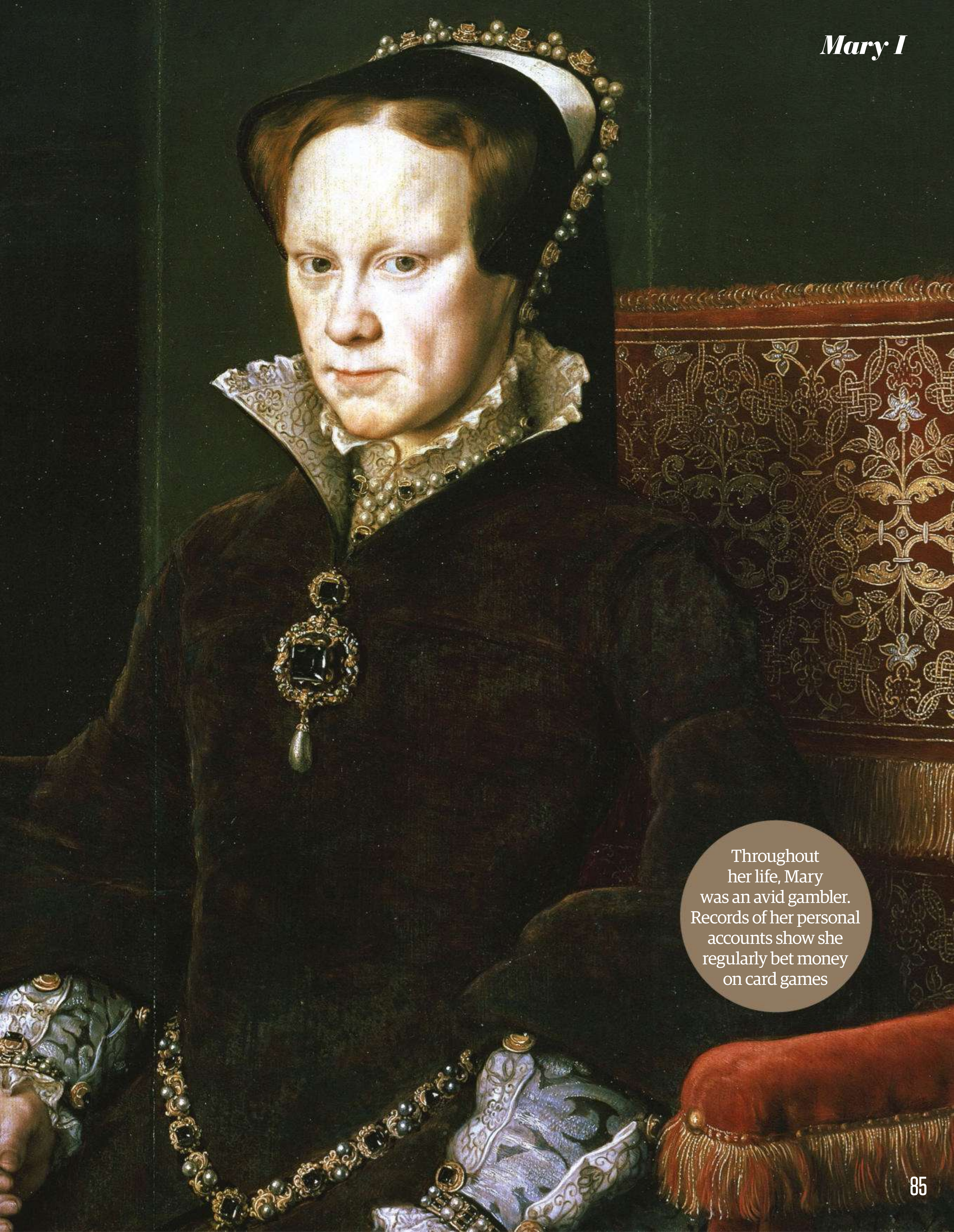
The answers find their roots in her early years. Born on 18 February 1516, Mary was the daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife Catherine of Aragon. Henry, a man not to be denied any desire, desperately wanted a son and heir to secure the house of Tudor's hold on the English throne - however, a series of miscarriages and the birth of a daughter only served to push the king further away from his Spanish queen. His pursuit of Catherine's maid of honour, Anne Boleyn, when Mary was around ten years old, would push Catherine further out of favour with Henry's court - and the young princess along with her.

> Mary loved music as a child and even entertained a group of French delegates by playing the virginal (harpsichord) at the age of four

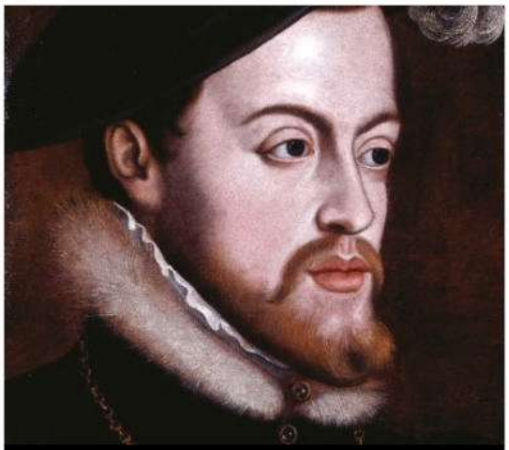
In early 1533, something happened that few could have predicted. Having already secretly married Anne Boleyn in January, and enraged at the pope's refusal to annul his first marriage to Catherine on the grounds it was unlawful in the eyes of God, Henry defied Rome and ended papal authority over the English crown. Henry then appointed himself supreme head of the English church and deemed his union to Catherine void. As a result, she was stripped of her title as queen and demoted to dowager princess of Wales, while Mary lost her princess status and instead gained the title 'The Lady Mary'. With her mother's marriage to the king in ruins, Mary was deemed illegitimate and no longer the heir apparent to the throne.

The year 1536 was another eventful one for Mary. Her mother Catherine passed away on 7 January. A few months later, tired of his second wife's inability to provide him with a son, Henry had Anne disgraced and eventually executed for a multitude of crimes. That year also saw the Pilgrimage of Grace, a political movement in the North of England that demanded the Act of Supremacy be repealed and Mary be reinstated as heir apparent - the rebellion came to nothing thanks to the king's merciless reaction, but it proved that Mary would always serve as a figurehead for loyal papist plotters.

Mary attempted to create some distance between herself and the marital affairs of her father in the years that followed, but she remained the trump card of many a Catholic plot, including a supposed attempted marriage to Reginald Pole (an English cardinal who would eventually serve as archbishop of Canterbury under Mary's own reign). Mary enjoyed something of a better relationship with her father's sixth and final wife, Katharine Parr. Parr did her best to repair Mary's relationship with the king, with Henry eventually signing a revised Act of Succession in 1544, which restored both Mary and Elizabeth as his heirs.



Throughout her life, Mary was an avid gambler. Records of her personal accounts show she regularly bet money on card games



Mary's husband Philip of Spain cared little for her and spent little time in England

War with France

In January 1556, Mary's husband, Prince Philip of Spain, became King Philip II following his father's abdication. The Spanish monarch rarely visited Mary in England, but when he landed on English soil in March 1557 he came seeking her support for Spain's war with France. Mary, keen to preserve ties with such a powerful Catholic nation, was in favour of joining the conflict, but her closest allies persuaded her to hold off due to a wave of bad harvests and a tattered economy inherited from Edward VI's reign.

When Thomas Stafford, a noble who had already incited a rebellion against Mary in 1554, invaded England in June with the blessing and financial backing of the French king, Henry II, everything changed. The rebellion was put down fairly easily, but it was enough to convince Mary to commit to Philip's campaign. The decision was a disaster for England, both financially and politically. Not only did it place strain on the relationship between England and Rome (since Pope Paul IV was allied with the French monarch), it also led to the loss of Calais, the last territory England had control of on the mainland of Europe. It was a terrible blow for the country – so much so that Mary was quoted as saying, "When I am dead and opened, you shall find Calais lying in my heart."

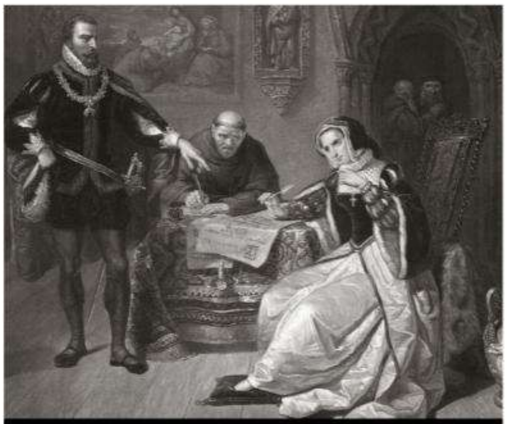
As Mary grew older, her dedication to her faith was always strong. Like many, she was forced to openly accept the king as her supreme ruler, but in secret her Catholic faith never wavered. When Henry died in 1547 and his only son Edward VI became king, England was launched into even stricter Protestant reform. As much a puppet for his guardians as he was a devout Anglican, Henry's young successor clashed regularly with Mary. The two rarely spent time together but when they did, the 15-year-old king was exasperated with his sister's barely veiled Roman Catholicism. When Edward passed away from what was most likely tuberculosis on 6 July 1553, Mary's right as heir apparent was struck another body blow when Edward defied the Act of Succession and named Lady Jane Grey, the daughter-in-law of one of his guardians, as his rightful heir.

Edward had invited Mary to visit him at his bedside, but Mary's advisors warned her that it was most likely a trap to imprison her, so she fled to the pro-Catholic county of East Anglia. With public support slipping following Grey's ascension, Mary and her allies amassed a sizable military force at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk and eventually marched on London and deposed Grey and her supporters. On 1 October, Mary was crowned Queen Mary I of England and, with the natural authority that gave her, she was finally ready to right the wrongs of her half-brother and father.

Now that she was queen, there was the important matter of finding a husband who provided the right political stability for England. Keen to return the country to its former Catholic self, Mary became engaged to Prince Philip of Spain (the son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and heir to the Spanish throne). The union was controversial and far from a love match, but it was the first move that tied England to the Roman Catholic territories in Europe. As England's first queen regnant (a queen made monarch by inheritance, not by marriage), the terms of the marriage were also amended to ensure that Mary's authority as queen could never be usurped by her husband. Mary and Philip were married on 25 July 1554, a mere two days after meeting for the first time in person.

When Jane Seymour was pregnant with Edward, Mary sent her cucumbers to help with her cravings

Yet organising a political alliance with a powerful Catholic nation was no mean feat considering Mary had inherited a Protestant kingdom. Charles V and Prince Philip needed reassurance that England was indeed committed to restoring the old ways. Mary's English Counter-Reformation began almost



This 1848 print depicts Mary as she signs the death warrant of her Protestant cousin, Lady Jane Grey

Defining moment

Act of Supremacy
November 1534

Mary's father, Henry VIII, has grown tired of bowing to the will of papal authority in Rome. When Pope Clement VII refuses to grant him an annulment for his marriage to Mary's mother, the king has Cardinal Wolsey and Parliament draw up a new act that proclaims the monarch to be, "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England." By breaking away from Rome, Henry begins a systematic Reformation that drains monasteries and funds and lands and secures Anglicanism as the one true faith in the kingdom.

Timeline

1516

A princess is born
Daughter of King Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, Princess Mary is born at the Palace of Placentia in Greenwich, London. She is the first of many pregnancies not to end in miscarriage for the queen.
18 February 1516

Mary is betrothed
In order to establish stable ties with France, Henry betroths the two-year-old princess to the Dauphin of France, the infant son of the French king, Francis I. Despite the potential strength of the arrangement, it falls apart three years later.
1518

Another engagement ensues
With the potential marriage to the French king's young son in tatters, Henry is still determined to use his daughter as a pawn in another political alliance. Now six years old, Mary is betrothed to marry her second cousin, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. This too falls apart a few years later.
1522

Princess of Wales
Mary is sent to Ludlow to preside over the Council of Wales and the Marches. She is only really there to represent the king while his courtiers preside for her. She is referred to as the Princess of Wales at this time, but is never officially granted the title by the king.
1525

Act of Succession
After the aging king marries Catherine Parr, his sixth and final wife, he finally relents to the idea of restoring his two daughters to the line of succession behind his son Edward. The Act of Succession 1544 effectively revokes Mary's illegitimacy.
14 July 1543

Mary proclaimed queen
Following the death of her half-brother Edward VI, Mary has his named successor, Lady Jane Grey, imprisoned in the Tower of London. Citing the Act of Succession, Mary is proclaimed the new monarch.
19 July 1553

> "Mary demonstrated that a woman could rule in her own right"

immediately with her first parliament in October deeming the marriage of her late parents valid while passing the First Statute of Repeal (which essentially negated all the religious legislation enacted during Edward VI's reign). Her father's Act of Supremacy was also rejected, with religious authority removed from the crown and returned to Rome.

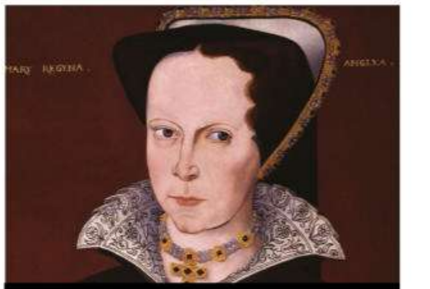
These changes were largely a popular move since England had only been a Protestant nation for six years, but such legislative restoration also came with a sting in the tail: the revival of the Heresy Acts. These acts deemed anyone practising any faith other than Roman Catholicism a heretic by proxy, leading to the voluntary exile of over 800 nobles who refused to renounce their new faith. The Heresy Acts decreed that heretics should be put to death by beheading or by being hanged, drawn and quartered; however the use of burning was also adopted. During Mary's reign, around 290 Protestants were executed – many of them burnt at the stake – for heresy, creating an air of aggressive persecution.

> The annual cost of the Great Wardrobe shot through the roof in the early part of her reign due to her taste for lavish materials and dresses

So was Mary really the bloodiest monarch of the Tudor line? Despite her dramatic nickname, Mary's brief Protestant purge was a single drop compared to the oceans of blood spilled by her predecessors. Edward VI had 5,500 rebels murdered in the Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549, while Henry VIII executed a staggering 72,000 people (including two of his own wives) during his reign, according to Holinshed's *Chronicles*. It was more the stark violence of Mary's executions during a time when Reformist and Counter-Reformist propaganda was flying around Europe that gave her actions such a lasting infamy.

Mary's reign only lasted five years and while it was marred by the mass burnings of Protestants and the largely disastrous alliance with Spain (which even led to the loss of Calais to France in one of the Tudor dynasty's most embarrassing military debacles), Mary did attempt to make some changes that ultimately benefited the kingdom. Financial reforms included changing the way the government collected taxes, including the normalisation of import tax. She even used Philip's reluctance to include England in Spain's grip on the lucrative trade with the New World to create new trade opportunities with the east coast of Africa.

By the time of her death on 17 November 1558, Mary's attempts to restore England to its Catholic roots had left the country in religious and political turmoil. However, for all her violent acts of religious reform, and her poor choice of a marital alliance with Spain, Mary appears to have loved her country deeply. She also demonstrated that a woman could rule in her own right, setting a precedent upon which her half-sister and successor Elizabeth I would build.



Mary I often indulged herself by buying expensive dresses from the continent

Landmarks in Mary's lifetime

Irish settlement

During her reign, Mary continued the Tudor conquest of Ireland by establishing a number of English settlements. These were placed in the Irish Midlands, effectively creating the King and Queen's counties. The two main towns were named Maryborough and Philipstown.

Rainy season

The five years of Mary's rule were uncharacteristically rainy. Persistent rain for months on end led to oversaturated soil, which in turn ruined entire crops. This, and damage from flooding, plunged the country into famine.

A strained economy

Poor weather conditions and harvests contributed to an already strained economic climate. Despite the alliance between England and Spain, trade between them was brittle at best. Spain refused to include England in its lucrative hold on the New World.

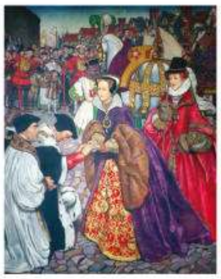
Mary and money

Mary made attempts to implement changes to the state of English currency and taxation. Prior to her reign, sheriffs had failed to adequately enforce and collect import taxes, so the queen had new legislation drawn up that clearly defined new rules for efficiently taking incoming resources.

Monastic restoration

While the lands confiscated in Henry VIII's Reformation were not relinquished by the crown, Mary was determined to help rebuild the monasteries that were torn apart decades before. She even used her own finances to restore a number of sites across the nation.

Mary is crowned
After riding into London in August with her half-sister Elizabeth and 800 supporting nobles, Mary releases the imprisoned Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, whom she makes lord chancellor. She is crowned by Gardiner at Westminster Abbey.
1 October 1553



Marriage to Prince Philip
Less than a week after dealing with the conspiracy to place Lady Jane Grey on the English throne, Mary marries Prince Philip, the son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Such a marriage blocks her Protestant half-sister's position as heir.
25 July 1554

The false pregnancy
Around September 1554 Mary's menstruation cycle stops – she then begins gaining weight as well as dealing with bouts of nausea. Mary takes this as a sign of pregnancy, but her belly recedes more than a year later. It was a phantom pregnancy.
Sep 1554 – Oct 1555

Burning Protestants
At the beginning of 1555, the restoration of Roman Catholicism in England leads to the return of the Heresy Acts. With religious doctrine on her side, Mary starts executing Protestant nobles. Burning at the stake is the most prevalent method and around 290 are executed in the purge.
February 1555

Defining moment

England drawn into war

March 1557

In January 1556, Prince Philip's father Charles V abdicates from the throne, effectively making Philip the new king. Often absent from Mary's side for great periods, the new Spanish monarch finally returns to England in March 1557. Philip has reignited the war with France (following a very brittle peace treaty between the two nations) and is keen to use his alliance with England to bolster his forces. War is officially declared in June, but the conflict causes strain with the papacy as Rome has political ties to the French king. The war is a political and economic disaster for England and even leads to the loss of Calais in January 1558.

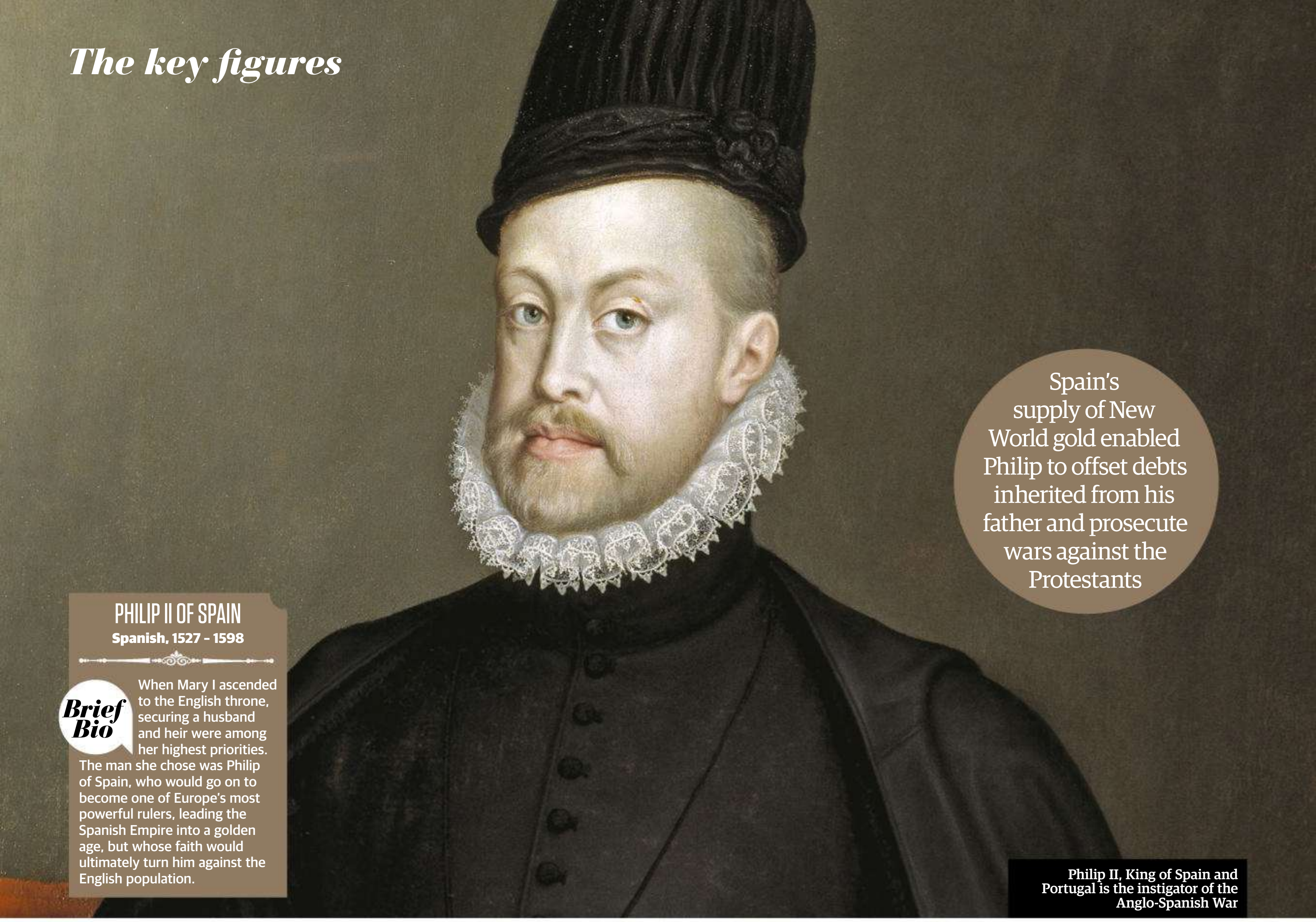
1702

Defining moment

The queen is dead

17 November 1558

As 1557 draws to a close, Mary appears to fall pregnant yet again. Sadly it proves to be another phantom term and the queen is forced to make the defining decision of her reign. In 1558 she names Elizabeth as her lawful successor. Mary falls ill during an influenza pandemic that is gripping London. It's not known whether it was the influenza that took her life or ongoing complications with ovarian cysts and uterine cancer.



Philip II, King of Spain and Portugal is the instigator of the Anglo-Spanish War

Spain's supply of New World gold enabled Philip to offset debts inherited from his father and prosecute wars against the Protestants

PHILIP II OF SPAIN

Spanish, 1527 – 1598

Brief Bio

When Mary I ascended to the English throne, securing a husband and heir were among her highest priorities. The man she chose was Philip of Spain, who would go on to become one of Europe's most powerful rulers, leading the Spanish Empire into a golden age, but whose faith would ultimately turn him against the English population.

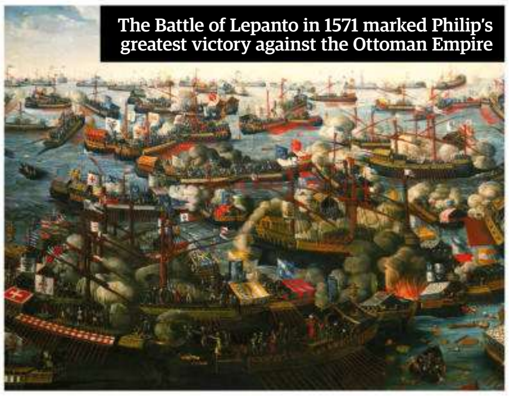
1527 – 1598

Philip II of Spain

The Spanish prince whose faith would shape an empire, but also bring bloody conflict to those he ruled

The son of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, Philip was raised in Spain and educated in statecraft by his mother and a host of advisors hand-picked by his father. His titles were extensive, including Prince of Girona, Prince of Asturias (the traditional title of the heir to the Kingdom of Spain), Archduke of Austria, and the titles of King of Naples and Jerusalem abdicated by his father specifically to elevate him to a suitable position to marry the Queen of England. Through his marriage to Mary he became King of England and Ireland, and Defender of the Faith, though according to the parliamentary act that was drawn up in response to Mary's decision to marry outside of the realm, these titles would only last as long as their marriage. Philip officially became King of Spain in 1556 upon his father's abdication, and successfully marched on Portugal in 1581 to claim the crown after the succession crisis triggered by the death of King Sebastian in 1578.

Though his marriage to Mary I, arranged largely by his father, was entirely political in nature, there was one thing that they had very much in common; the strength of their faith. Like Mary, Philip's Catholicism was a driving force throughout his life, and he fully supported Mary's desire to re-establish Roman Catholicism as the principal faith in England after the religious upheavals of her father and brother's reigns, leading to the revival of the formerly repealed Heresy Laws and an era



The Battle of Lepanto in 1571 marked Philip's greatest victory against the Ottoman Empire

of extreme persecution for England's Protestants, with hundreds exiled or executed. The conflict between the Catholics and Protestants in England mirrored the long-running struggles between the Holy Roman Empire and the Lutheran Protestants in Europe, and it had been Charles' hope that Philip's marriage with Mary would produce a Catholic heir and ultimately bring England into the Empire. In the wake of Mary's false pregnancy in 1555 however, Philip left England, convinced that there would be no heir forthcoming from this union, and returned to Spain, focussing his efforts on the ongoing conflicts on the continent. While Mary descended into depression at his departure, Philip led his armies to victory over the French at Flanders, concluding the Italian Wars, ending French hopes of supplanting the Hapsburgs as the dominant power in Europe and cementing the Spanish Empire's reputation as a force to be reckoned with.

Charles' health had been in decline for some time, and following his passing of the Low Countries and the Spanish crown to Philip, he went on to abdicate the Imperial Throne to his brother Ferdinand in 1558 before retiring to a monastery. The Spanish Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, combined for the first time under Charles' rule, were once more split into two separate entities under different kings. With news of Mary's death that same year signalling the end of his entitlement to the English crown, Philip turned his attention to Mary's sister and successor, Elizabeth I. Despite Elizabeth being a Protestant, Philip offered a proposal of marriage in the hope of holding on to the English crown. Although the proposal came to nothing, Philip continued to maintain good relations with England for many years after Elizabeth's accession.

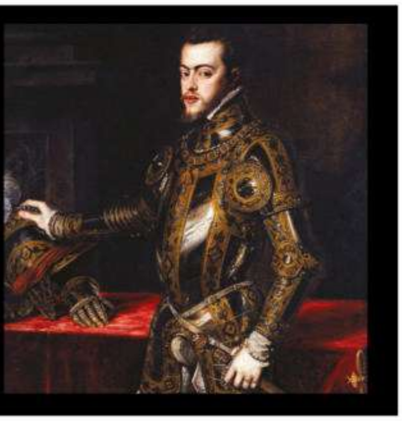
In the meantime a new threat had arisen to the south that occupied Philip's attention; the Ottoman Empire of Suleiman the Magnificent had expanded into the Mediterranean, taking the Balearics and raiding Spain's southern coast. The Ottoman's reputation was fierce, and Philip sought aid from the Pope and a number of coastal states that stood to suffer if the Ottoman's aggression went unchecked, ultimately forging the Holy League in 1560, and sending ships out to face the invaders. After defeat at Djerba, and again at Malta in 1565, the situation looked bleak for the League, but everything changed in 1571 when Philip's half brother, Don Juan of Austria, led a fleet at the Battle of Lepanto. Outclassed and outgunned, the Muslims were decimated by the Christian fleet, bringing an end to Suleiman's plans to expand across the Mediterranean. Aside from a few smaller clashes over the next 14 years, Philip's war with the Ottoman Empire was over, and a peace treaty was finally signed in 1585.

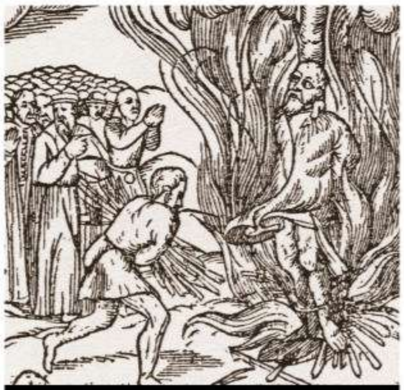
> Lepanto was one of the most significant naval battles in history, marking a major change in the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire

Just as peace with the Ottoman Empire began, peace with the English came to an end. Elizabeth's decision to aid Protestants rebelling against Philip's oppressive rule in the Netherlands, coupled with recent apparent acts of piracy by English privateers against Spanish treasure ships returning from the New World, could only be seen by Philip as an act of war and he responded in kind. If he could not secure the crown and bring Catholicism back to England by marriage, he would do so by force. Philip's first armada set sail for English shores in 1588 and heralded the start of the Anglo-Spanish War, a conflict that would outlast both the Spanish King and the Virgin Queen.

Queen Mary's Marriage Act

In response to domestic concerns over the potential political repercussions of Mary and Philip's marriage, the Act for the Marriage of Queen Mary to Philip of Spain was passed by Parliament to clarify the benefits that Spain would gain from the union, whilst also protecting England's rights as a sovereign nation. For the duration of their marriage Philip would assume the titles and honours as King of England and official documents would be jointly signed by king and queen, but it was also made clear that Philip would not remain king in the event of Mary's death and England would not be drawn into Henry V's ongoing conflicts in Europe.





At the height of Protestant repression in England, those accused of heresy were burnt at the stake in the streets

Landmarks of Philip's lifetime

The Spanish Inquisition

The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, better known as the Spanish Inquisition and established in 1478, found their efforts intensified under Philip's anti-Protestant reign, though in truth Spanish Protestants were few and the levels of persecution paled in comparison to the brutality occurring in England.

A crown of many parts

Prior to 1516, Spain was a collection of nominally independent kingdoms, and it was only under Charles V's rule that a unified Spanish kingdom came about. Allied with the other territories of the Hapsburg Empire, and benefitting from the treasures of the New World, Spain became one of the foremost European powers of the age.

Shadow of the Black Death

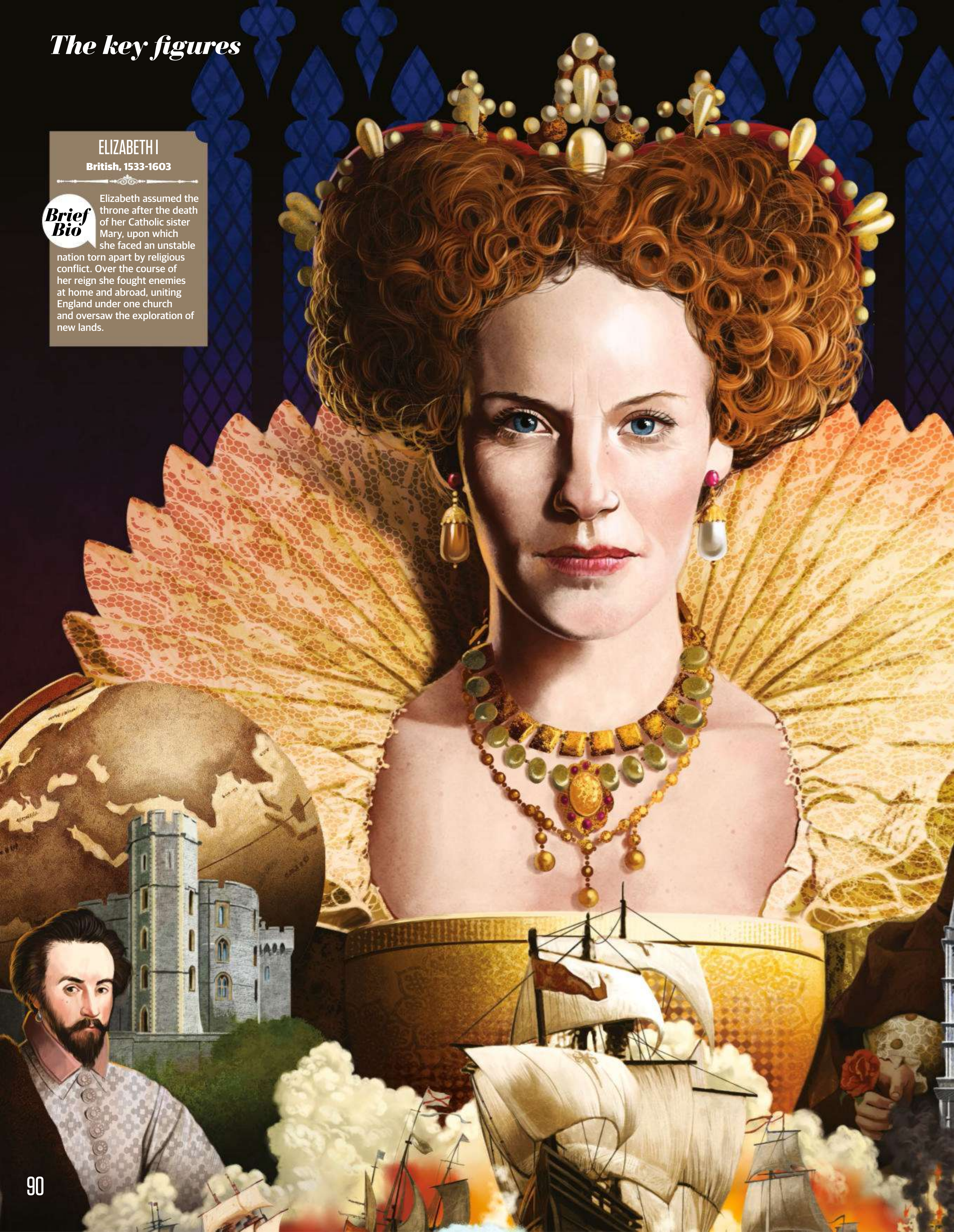
The Black Death, which killed millions worldwide in the 14th century, resurfaced during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries with London and mainland Europe suffering repeated outbreaks throughout the Tudor period. Lacking medical understanding, bad air, astrological forces, foreigners and God's displeasure have all received the blame across the years.

An alternative view

In 1516, Martin Luther's Protestant theology began to spread throughout the northern territories of the Holy Roman Empire, igniting an ongoing conflict that would divide Europe and spark violent uprisings and wars throughout Philip's reign and beyond.

The Age of Discovery

Columbus' Spanish-funded discovery of the Americas in 1492, whilst by no means the first, was one of the more significant successes of a legendary period of European exploration that saw an unprecedented flow of wealth into European coffers; an invaluable resource for Philip in maintaining his empire and prosecuting his wars.



ELIZABETH I

British, 1533-1603

Brief Bio

Elizabeth assumed the throne after the death of her Catholic sister Mary, upon which she faced an unstable nation torn apart by religious conflict. Over the course of her reign she fought enemies at home and abroad, uniting England under one church and oversaw the exploration of new lands.

1533 – 1603

Elizabeth I

She fought off foreign invasions and domestic rebellions but did she really preside over a golden age?

In 1588, against the advice of her most trusted aides, Elizabeth I rode out on her grey gelding to address her troops gathered at Tilbury in Essex in preparation of repelling the expected invasion force of the Spanish Armada. Looking out at the assembled faces before her, she delivered a speech that would go down in history and for many would forever define her: "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king – and of a king of England too."

The speech would have to be transcribed and redistributed for the soldiers who were unable to hear the queen but they had all seen their monarch, armoured and on her steed, ready to stand by them to repel the Catholic invasion. This image of Elizabeth has been the key to our popular perception of her for centuries, but there's much more to her. Elizabeth was cunning and capricious, but she could be blinded by affection, if only temporarily. She was tremendously clever, with an almost unfailing sense of what her people wanted or needed from her, but had to see off foreign invasion attempts and homegrown rebellions. While she was sitting on the throne of England the country became acquainted with some of its greatest triumphs and darkest hours.

When Elizabeth came to the throne in November 1558, the whole of Europe was on tenterhooks. How would the new Protestant queen follow the reign of her Catholic sister Mary? With an unstable nation and conspiracies at home and abroad, the situation required diplomacy, intelligence and bravery; three qualities which Elizabeth had always had in ample supply. In fact, the unstable situation was nothing new to her; Elizabeth's position had been precarious from the moment she was born. The daughter of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, she was immediately deemed as illegitimate by any Catholic nations, who regarded the king's divorce of Catherine of Aragon as illegal. In their eyes, Catherine's daughter Mary was the only rightful heir to the throne.

Although both parents had been desperate for a boy, Anne would be a doting mother to her infant child, but she was sent to the executioner's block in 1536 after failing to produce a male heir for her king. Although Henry's third wife Jane Seymour was kind to Elizabeth and Mary, she had her own child to attend to with the birth of her son and Henry's heir, Edward. Henry himself would not see much of Elizabeth until 1542, when he decided the time had come to reacquaint himself with his young daughter. He found her to be intelligent and charming, and decided that he would reinstate both Mary and Elizabeth back into his lineage.

In 1543, Henry married Catherine Parr, his last wife, and relations within the royal family warmed, as Mary took a maternal interest in young Edward, while Elizabeth enjoyed a sisterly relationship with both. However, when Edward took the throne upon their father's death, cracks started to form. First, Elizabeth had to contend with the amorous attentions of Catherine's new husband Thomas Seymour, which caused a scandal at court in 1548. Seymour's intentions were seen as treasonous, and Elizabeth was reported to be pregnant. The young princess denied these rumours, confounding her interrogator. "She hath a very good wit and nothing is gotten of her but by great policy," he wrote. This

"She was tremendously clever, with an almost unfailing sense of what her people wanted, or needed from her"

How good was Elizabeth at balancing the books?

While the popular image is that Mary left England in a sorry state, Leanda de Lisle explains that Elizabeth's fiscal behaviour was far from immaculate. Mary left England £227,000 in debt, while her sister produced debts of £350,000. "Mary's reign was not a 'disaster'. The popular image of Mary – always 'Bloody Mary', rarely Mary I – has been greatly influenced by a combination of sexual and religious prejudice," explains De Lisle. "Mary I had named Elizabeth as her heir, despite her personal feelings towards her sister, and so allowed the crown to be inherited peacefully. Elizabeth continued to refuse to name anyone. In 1562, believing she was dying, she asked for Robert Dudley to be made Lord Protector with an income of £20,000." Elizabeth was notoriously reluctant to engage in warfare because of its costs and risk, but the Spanish conflict dragged on for years, while she awarded monopolies to her favourites at court and crops failed. "While we remember Elizabeth's success in repelling the Armada in 1588," says De Lisle, "We forget that the war continued and impoverished the country and the crown, a situation made worse by the corruption of court officials including notorious high-ranking figures such as Robert Cecil. People starved in the 1590s and the elite even began to fear possible revolution."

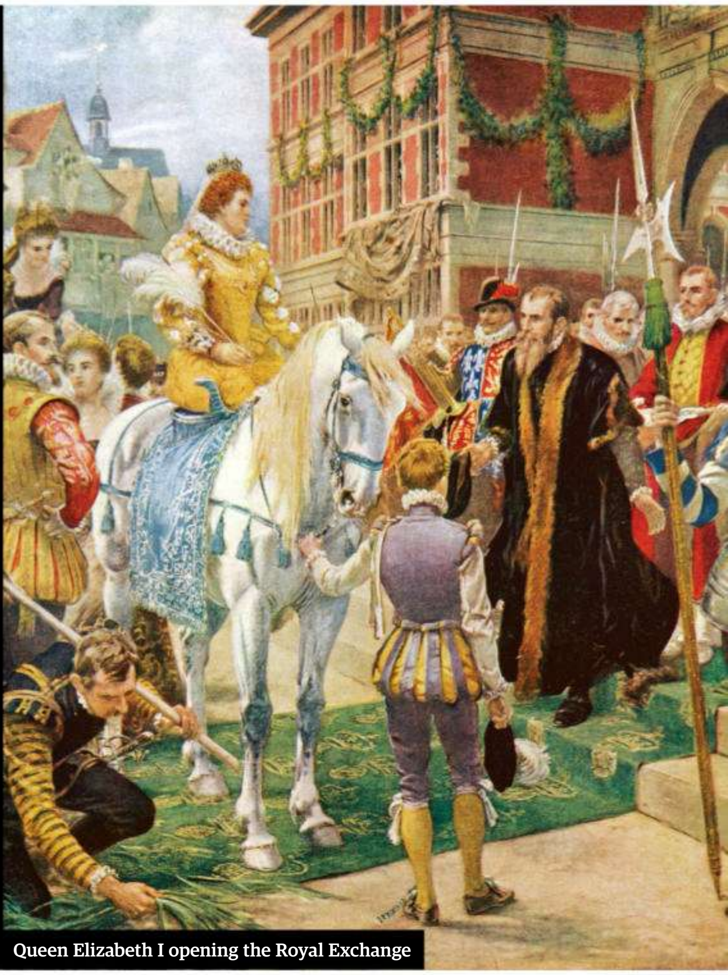
Verdict

Elizabeth was forced to deal with circumstances beyond her control, such as poor harvests and an ongoing conflict with Spain, but the fact is that she was not the financial marvel many believe her to be.

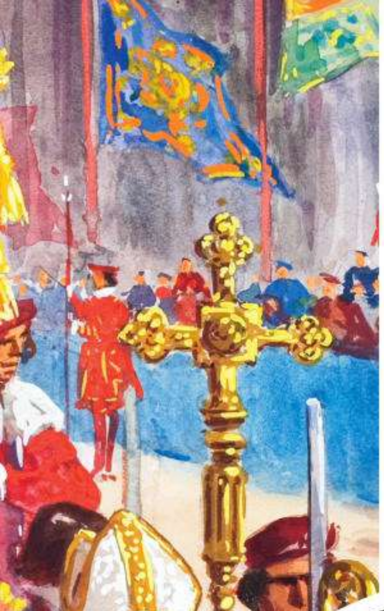
Borrowing money in the 16th century

Before the English merchant Thomas Gresham came to prominence, the Tudors had borrowed money from the great European banks such as the Antwerp Exchange. However, these banks charged a high interest rate and it was generally acknowledged that going around Europe borrowing money did nothing to improve England's image as a serious power. Money could also be borrowed from independent merchants, such as Horatio Palavicino, from whom Elizabeth was forced to borrow money late in her reign. Gresham had previously helped Edward VI rid himself of most of his debts and founded the Royal Exchange in 1571 to challenge the power of Antwerp.

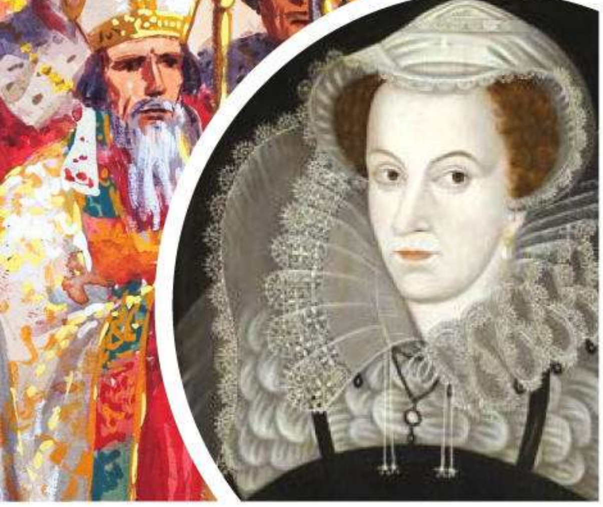
Now that Elizabeth could seek loans from within her realm, she was able to exert greater pressure to get what she wanted, while Parliament could grant her more funds if they chose. Royal revenues were supposed to cover the basic expenses of governance, while Parliament could add to the war chest. Later in her reign, she began to use increasingly severe taxation, which contributed to her decreasing popularity.



Queen Elizabeth I opening the Royal Exchange



Picture depicting the coronation of Elizabeth I in 1558



Portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was executed after being found guilty of plotting against Elizabeth I

practice would serve her well once Mary took the throne but not all players were as skilled in the game of thrones; Seymour was executed the following year.

When the staunchly Catholic Mary refused to convert, Edward began proceedings to remove both his sisters from the line to the throne, fixing his hopes on his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, instead. However, the prince was seldom in good health during his short life, so it was no surprise that he died before the contract could be finalised and Mary became the new Queen of England. Just as Edward had asked Mary to change her faith, the new queen was determined that her sister should convert. She acquiesced without enthusiasm, but it was clear to both Protestants and Catholics that her true allegiance still lay with her father's Church of England rather than the Pope's Catholic Church. Over the course of Mary's reign, many conspiracy plots were designed to get Elizabeth onto the throne. None of them succeeded, but they did almost manage to get her killed.

In 1554, Thomas Wyatt attempted a rebellion following the announcement that Mary would marry the Spanish king Philip. The queen's reprisal was brutal and swift, executing not only the ringleaders but Jane Grey as well. Elizabeth claimed ignorance, a trick she managed to successfully repeat a year later after another attempted rebellion in 1555, but her sister's patience was wearing thin and Elizabeth was placed in the Tower of London, with some Catholic supporters clamouring for her execution. Elizabeth's future prospects were looking anything but golden, and the next few months saw her walking a political tightrope. Mary, desperate to provide her husband and her country with a Catholic heir to end the uncertainty surrounding the throne, announced that she was pregnant, but by 1558, it became clear that Mary's condition was not pregnancy, but a devastating illness. Her health broke quickly, and she died on 17 November of that year after begging Elizabeth to keep England Catholic once she took the throne. Her wishes would not be fulfilled.

Elizabeth's coronation was a stunning balancing act. With countless eyes waiting for any hint of an overtly Protestant or Catholic gestures, Elizabeth managed to confound them all. Instead, the emphasis was elsewhere: Elizabeth's intention to restore England to a state of prosperity. The new queen knew that if she was to have any chance of surviving her early years she would need trusted and astute advisors, and chose William Cecil and Robert Dudley. Cecil had worked for Edward, survived the reign of Mary and was fiercely loyal to Elizabeth. In contrast, Dudley's appointment and favour with the queen had nothing to do with his abilities as a politician. He had known Elizabeth since childhood and her affection for him had only grown stronger, and rumours abounded that she spent the nights as well as the days with him.

Cecil disapproved of Dudley and agreed with the majority of Parliament that Elizabeth should marry as soon as possible. The eyes of France and Spain were fixed on England and it made sense for the queen to create a marriage alliance with one of these major powers for her and the country's

Was a religious compromise met?

The Church of England was one of compromise and middle ground. While Elizabeth was a Protestant, she didn't hold the puritanical beliefs of some of her council members. She introduced the Act of Supremacy in 1558, which reaffirmed England's separation from Rome and established her as the head of the Church. Elizabeth understood the dangers of trying to impose religion and allowed Catholicism to continue, provided it took place in secret.

However, Leanda de Lisle reminds us that we should not forget Elizabeth's willingness to crack down when necessary. "Elizabeth's conservatism and pragmatism has seen her described as a religious moderate, in contrast to the 'fanatical' Mary," she explains. "But as the new Protestant Queen of a largely Catholic country Elizabeth was necessarily moderate, and as her reign grew longer, she proved that, like Mary, she could be utterly ruthless when faced by a threat. The hundreds of executions of villagers following the Northern Rebellion far exceeded anything her predecessors had done in similar circumstances; her later persecution of Catholics was also relentless and cruel. It is a little-known fact that she also burned heretics – namely Anabaptists – these were far fewer in number than Mary's victims, but then there weren't that many Anabaptists!" She executed both Protestants and Catholics for publicly disobeying the laws of the Church of England. However, events in Europe show the English Queen in a much more favourable light. Comparatively, Elizabeth was extremely tolerant. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris showed the fervour with which Catholic Europeans detested Protestants. She was also much more tolerant than many of her advisors.

Verdict

Elizabeth successfully found a moderate middle ground in a very turbulent time during her reign, but would crack down mercilessly if the rules she had laid down were broken.

VS

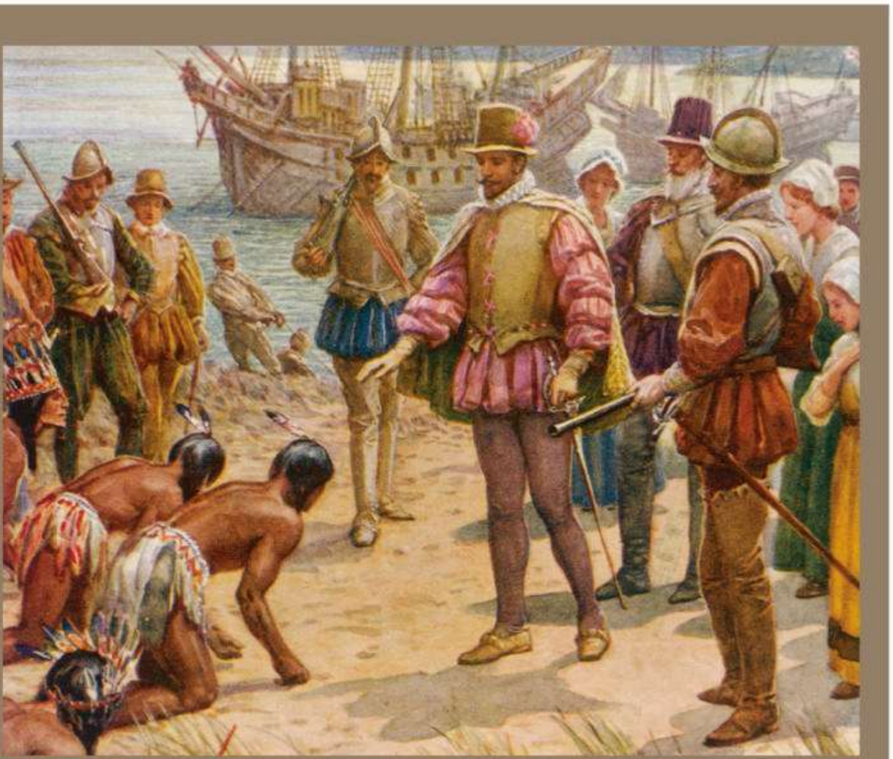
Catholic	C of E
1 The services were held in Latin, countermanding the reformation's ideal that everyone should be able to understand. The English prayer book was banned.	1 The image of the minister became much simpler. They were not allowed to wear Roman Catholic vestments, such as the surplice.
2 Church furnishings were restored to their former lavish state and the buildings were now decorated completely with Catholic artwork.	2 All rood lofts, a screen portraying the crucifixion, a common feature in Catholic churches, were removed. The Pope was not the head of the church.
3 Catholic Mass was reintroduced, and Holy Communion was now banned by law.	3 The Bishop's Bible, which was in English rather than Latin, was restored, opening it up to a wider readership.
4 The clergy were not allowed to marry. Priests who had married before the new law came into effect were given a choice of two options: leave their families or lose their job.	4 There was a general removal of 'superstition', such as making the sign of the cross during communion. Simplicity was what the Puritans strived for.

> "The queen's reprisal was brutal and swift, executing not only the ringleaders but also Jane Grey"

safety. King Philip II made no secret of his desire to marry Elizabeth, but she had no interest in marrying Mary's former husband. Henry of Anjou was suggested as a match, but he was still a child. Elizabeth spoke instead of being married to her nation, but scandal struck when Dudley's wife Amy died suddenly after apparently falling down the stairs in 1560. It was rumoured that Dudley had committed the deed for his queen, and Elizabeth was forced to expel him from her court.

In 1561, Elizabeth's cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, returned to Scotland from France. For many Catholics, Mary was the true successor and she did little to downplay those clamouring for a Catholic monarch. Her arrival was perfectly timed, as Elizabeth was on the verge of death due to smallpox. However, she recovered and, with the scandal over Dudley dissipating, Elizabeth chose him to be Lord Protector, bringing him back into her court, before shocking everyone by suggesting a marriage between him and Mary. This was Elizabeth showing her political astuteness; she knew well that Scotland with a Catholic heir would

> "The queen rallied troops by declaring that she would fight by their side to repel anyone who dare set foot on their land"



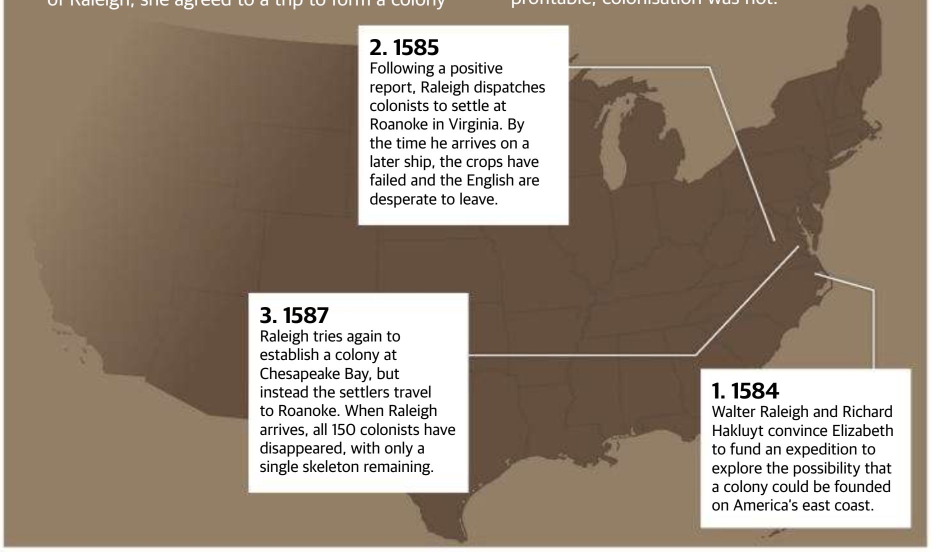
Did Elizabeth have a genuine thirst for new worlds?

Although the expansion of trade into India occurred during Elizabeth's reign, in terms of exploration she is best remembered for England's attempt to colonise North America. The Spanish and Portuguese had already laid claim to much of South America, establishing lucrative trade routes, but North America was relatively unexplored. Elizabeth was reluctant to fund exploratory voyages for much the same reasons that she was reluctant to fund wars: they were expensive and risky. However, she could be won around with the promise of riches from one of her favourites and, when sailor Davy Ingram returned to England with alluring tales of riches and simple inhabitants, geographer Richard Hakluyt began plotting a serious expedition to be led by Walter Raleigh.

With the promise of fortune and the flattery of Raleigh, she agreed to a trip to form a colony named after her: Virginia. The first party launched, and Raleigh would follow. When the nobleman arrived, he saw the settlement had failed. The English were desperate to leave. Raleigh's second attempt was intended for Chesapeake Bay, but the first group, led by John White, returned to Roanoke. Raleigh arrived with his second group and found no trace of survivors. Elizabeth was disappointed that these costly ventures yielded no results. There was one purpose to these expeditions, as de Lisle explains very simply: "Making money."

Verdict

The Elizabethan era's reputation for exploration is largely due to the fact that there was money to be made from it. Piratical ventures were profitable; colonisation was not.



2. 1585
Following a positive report, Raleigh dispatches colonists to settle at Roanoke in Virginia. By the time he arrives on a later ship, the crops have failed and the English are desperate to leave.

3. 1587
Raleigh tries again to establish a colony at Chesapeake Bay, but instead the settlers travel to Roanoke. When Raleigh arrives, all 150 colonists have disappeared, with only a single skeleton remaining.

1. 1584
Walter Raleigh and Richard Hakluyt convince Elizabeth to fund an expedition to explore the possibility that a colony could be founded on America's east coast.

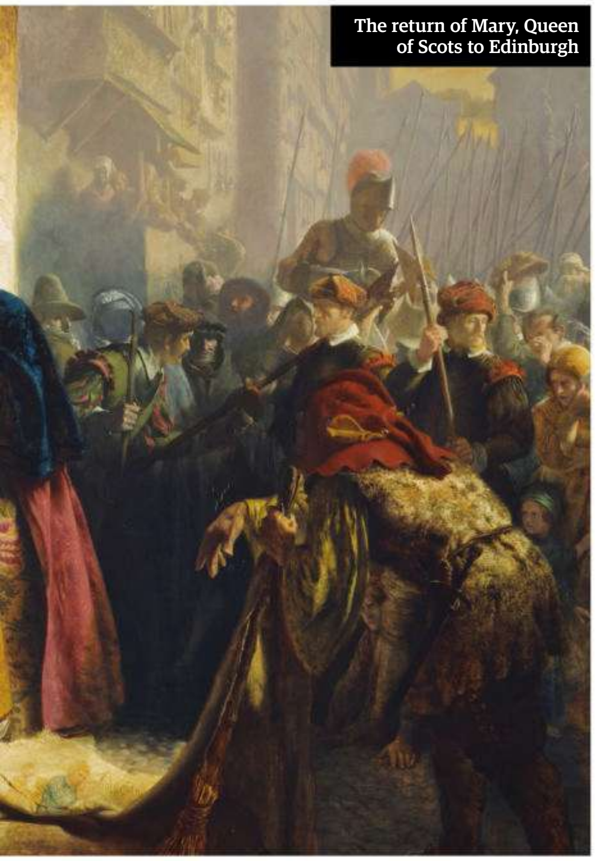
have too much power, but an heir produced by her favourite and Mary, Queen of Scots could potentially unite the two countries. However, Dudley refused and Mary had no interest in marrying her cousin's paramour.

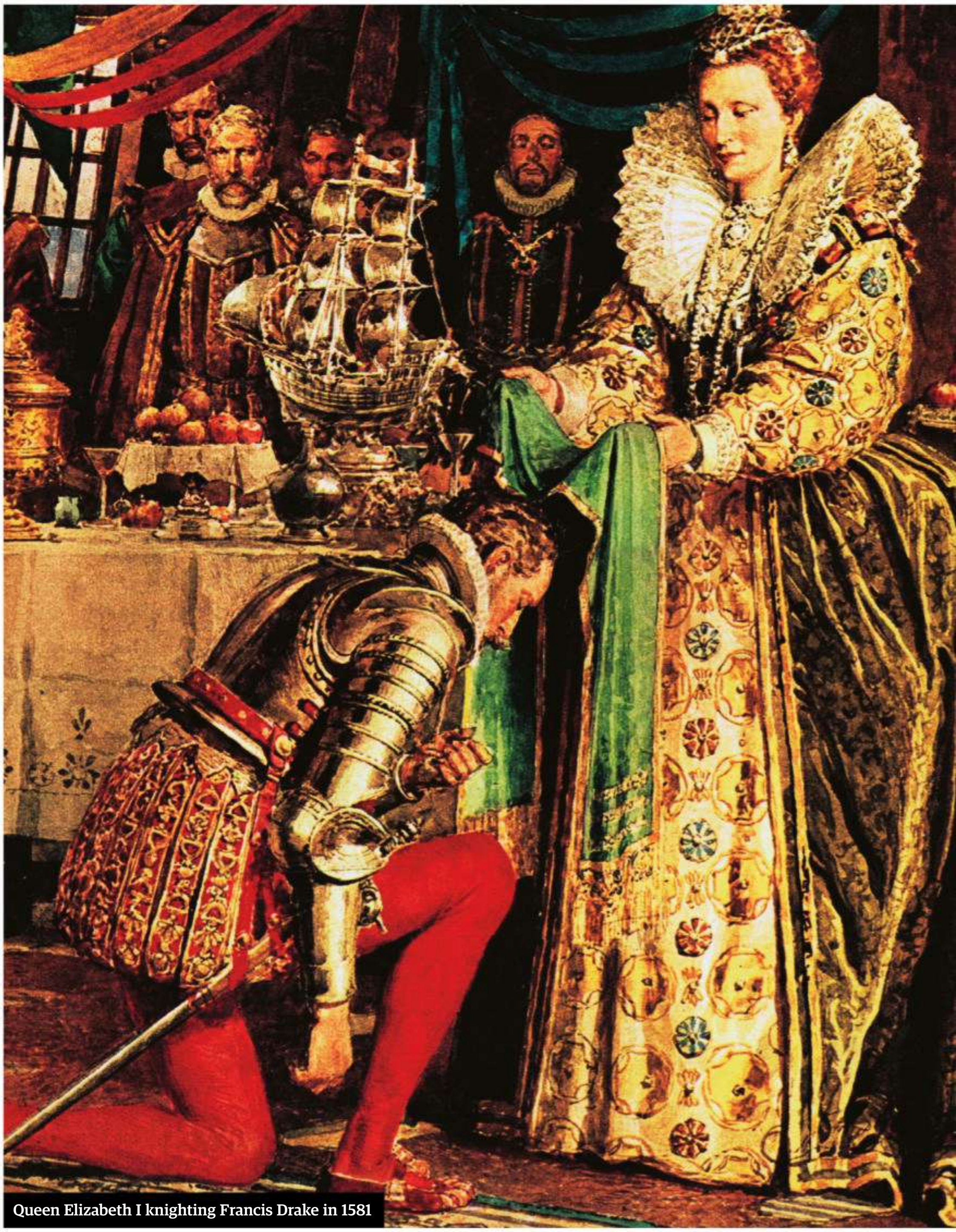
Instead, Mary married for love, choosing Lord Henry Darnley. Seeing this may have prompted Elizabeth to renew her interest in Dudley, which greatly upset the council, in particular the ambitious Lord Norfolk. When the tension between Norfolk and Dudley grew too great, Elizabeth understood that she needed to assert her authority. "I will have here but one mistress and no master," she told Dudley. It was both a political statement and a personal one. The lack of a husband and heir was only made worse in 1566 when Mary gave birth to a son, James, but she was desperately unhappy. Darnley was a violent, drunken husband: many believed he brutally murdered her secret lover, David Rizzio. Darnley would meet his own nasty end a year later, when he was found strangled in the garden of a house. Mary quickly married the Earl of Bothwell, the man who had allegedly murdered Darnley, and Scottish forces rose against her. Imprisoned and forced to abdicate, she eventually fled to England. Elizabeth agreed to give Mary shelter, but her arrival in the north had given Catholics a figurehead and rebellion brewed.

The northern Earls suggested that Norfolk should marry Mary: soon, the Northern Rebellion had begun. As the rebel forces marched south, Elizabeth moved Mary to Coventry and mustered troops of her own. The southern Earls rallied to her cause, which stunned the rebel forces, who began to retreat. Elizabeth's victory was quick and decisive, with 700 men being executed in a brutal display of power. Norfolk was placed under arrest, but a lack of concrete evidence postponed his execution, until he was implicated in the Ridolfi plot, which aimed to make Spain's Philip II king. Elizabeth ordered and rescinded Norfolk's execution three times – a prime example of how indecisive she could be at times – before finally deciding that he simply had to die.

If Elizabeth's position at home appeared shaky it was positively stable compared to how she was viewed abroad. The Pope decreed that anyone who murdered the heretical English queen would be forgiven, a statement King Philip took to heart. Not wanting to risk open war, Elizabeth found other ways to aggravate her enemies. She quietly patronised the piratical exploits of John Hawkins and later his cousin Francis Drake. In 1577, when he planned to travel to South America to raid Spanish gold, Elizabeth met Drake with Francis Walsingham, one of her ambassadors to France.

The cautious Cecil had to be kept in the dark, but she told Drake explicitly that she supported him: "I would gladly be revenged on the King of Spain for diverse injuries I have received." Having sailed through the Straits of Magellan and captured a Spanish ship carrying up to £200,000 in gold,


The return of Mary, Queen of Scots to Edinburgh


Queen Elizabeth I knighting Francis Drake in 1581

Drake decided to sail across the Pacific, becoming the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. Elizabeth gloried in his achievement, and when she met the Spanish ambassador in 1581, she pointedly wore a crucifix Drake had given to her from the loot. She dined with Drake on the Golden Hind and knighted him. He had done her proud.

These piratical exploits stood in sharp contrast to the events of 1572. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris – the assassination of a number of French Calvinist Protestants – shocked England and the ambassador Sir Francis Walsingham was forced to take refuge. Elizabeth brought him back to London to become her spymaster, where he advised that Mary, Queen of Scots was a real danger. The uprising was not only a shocking scene for English Protestants; it was also a sign that the Protestant Netherlands and their booming wool trade would soon be in danger.

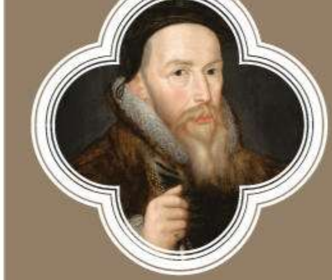
When William the Silent asked Elizabeth for military assistance, she did not want to be seen to intervene and give Philip of Spain an excuse to attack. Walsingham counselled war, while Cecil continued to preach marriage. So Elizabeth entertained the idea of marrying the Duke of Anjou, roughly ten years after it had first been suggested. Then, he had been an ugly youth and she had been a beautiful queen. Now, she was visibly older and the flattery of the French ambassador and Anjou's letters began to win her over. When they finally met, it appeared that Elizabeth really was in love, but there were genuine concerns over how the English people would react.

"The anxieties Elizabeth expressed to the emissary of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1561, that she too could not marry anyone without triggering unrest in one group or another, only deepened following Mary, Queen of Scots's disastrous marriages to Darnley and then Bothwell – which ended in her overthrow," explains Leanda de Lisle, author of *Tudor: The Family Story.* "Elizabeth continued to look publicly for a husband to fulfil national expectations that she would provide them with an undisputed heir, and surely she hoped it was not impossible. She was married to her kingdom – a phrase she had learned from Mary Tudor. But while Mary had married, Elizabeth did not because she feared revolt by those who disapproved of her choice."

Although she clearly wanted to marry the man that she had nicknamed her "frog," the English people found the idea of their Virgin Queen marrying a French Catholic absolutely repulsive. When a pamphlet appeared that condemned the union, Elizabeth decreed that both the author and his printer should have their right hands cut off. Her Privy Council was split in half, with the jealous Robert Dudley vehemently opposed. Elizabeth was heartbroken, but she agreed to abstain. She gave Anjou £10,000 to continue his war against Philip in the Netherlands, but did not see him again. He tried to take power for himself but failed and died a year later. When William the Silent was assassinated in his own house in 1584

Main players of

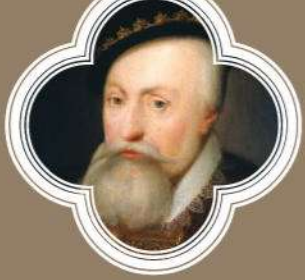
Council and Government



William Cecil

1520-98

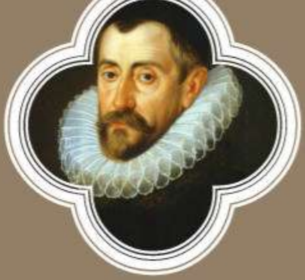
A canny political operator who understood the difficulties that were ahead, Cecil was Elizabeth's first appointment and was fiercely loyal, dedicating his life to helping her. Although he believed she should marry, Elizabeth knew Cecil was invaluable and pressured him into staying on, even when he was sickly and deaf.



Robert Dudley

1532-88

Dudley had known Elizabeth since childhood, and was her first love. His appointment to court had more to do with her affection for him than any outstanding abilities as a politician, however, and his presence at court proved to be a continual source of rumour and scandal. Their relationship was rocky and driven by passion.

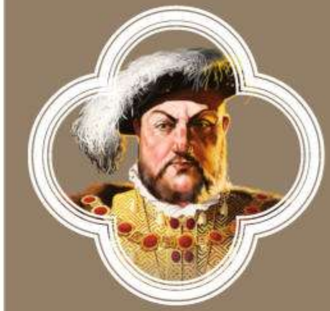


Francis Walsingham

1532-90

The Protestant Walsingham was allowed to return to England after Mary's death, and quickly became one of Elizabeth's most invaluable assets. A brilliant spymaster and politician, he understood the threat that Mary, Queen of Scots posed, and engineered her downfall. He also supported Drake and Raleigh's explorations.

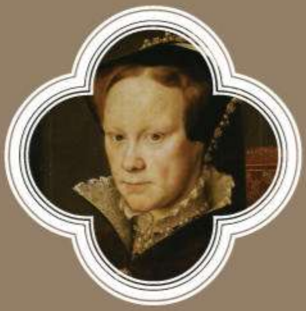
Family



Henry VIII

1491-1547

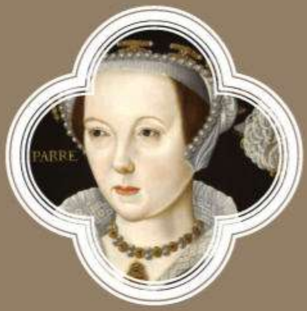
Henry was desperate for a boy to carry on his family name, and was disappointed when Anne Boleyn gave him Elizabeth. He was absent for much of her childhood, but was kept informed of her progress nonetheless. When he finally met his daughter he was very impressed, so much so that he reinstated her and Mary into his legacy.



Mary Tudor

1516-58

Despite their differences, Mary, Elizabeth and their brother Edward had a relatively close relationship as children. When she became Queen, Mary was desperate for Elizabeth to convert and unable to understand why she wouldn't. She came close to executing her sister, but abstained, finally requesting that she keep England Catholic.



Catherine Parr

1512-48

Catherine and Elizabeth became close during her marriage to Henry, and Elizabeth lived with Catherine for some time after his death. However, Catherine's husband Thomas Seymour was more interested in their young charge than his wife, and she assisted in his attempts at seduction, dying soon after they failed.

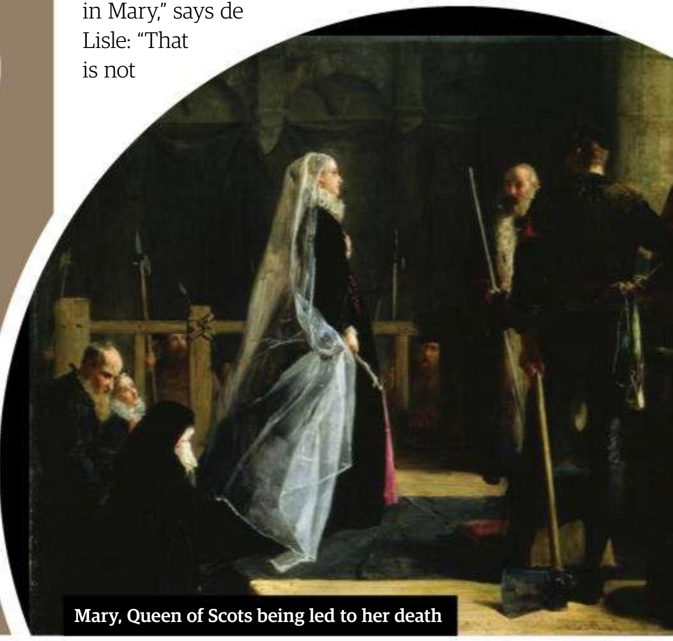
“She bitterly resented the circumstances of Mary’s execution”

by a Catholic fanatic, it was clear that military intervention could not be put off any longer and so in 1585, to the relief of her impatient councillors, she agreed to send a small force of men. Dudley took command in the Netherlands but proved to be incompetent, losing territory to Philip’s general, the Duke of Parma. Mary was now more dangerous than ever. Elizabeth ordered her imprisonment at the urging of Francis Walsingham, who had no intention of allowing her to live much longer. He arranged for a servant, one of his own spies, to suggest that Mary smuggle letters in beer barrels, allowing Walsingham to read everything. When Thomas Babingdon wrote to Mary with a plan to assassinate Elizabeth and give her the crown Mary wrote back with her approval; the spymaster’s trap had worked perfectly, and he had ensnared his unwitting prey.

Walsingham leapt into action and ordered the conspirators’ execution. Elizabeth had always been reluctant to execute her cousin, but she agreed she would have to stand trial. It was no surprise when the court decided that Mary should be put to death. Elizabeth grieved for Mary, or at least lamented her death. The man who had delivered the warrant was imprisoned and stripped of his title.

Elizabeth was always reluctant to sign a death warrant - or at least she was reluctant to be seen to sign it. We can’t know how much of Elizabeth’s grief was genuine, but she bitterly resented the circumstances of Mary’s execution.

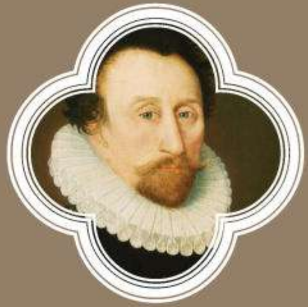
“Elizabeth was reluctant to be seen to execute first the senior nobleman in England, in Norfolk, and then a fellow queen, in Mary,” says de Lisle: “That is not



Mary, Queen of Scots being led to her death

the golden age

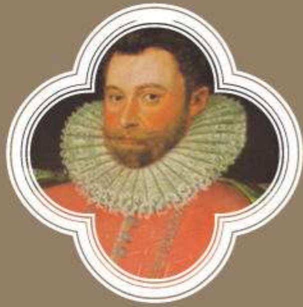
Explorers



John Hawkins

1532-95

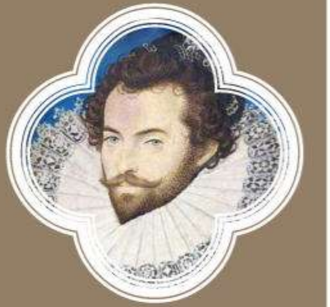
Hawkins may have possessed a coat of arms, but he first managed to find favour with the Queen as a pirate. With Elizabeth’s implicit permission, he planned and executed a series of daring raids on Spanish ports in the West Indies, but after a disastrous third voyage he returned to England, where he began working for the Queen in a more direct capacity.



Francis Drake

1540-96

Having sailed on his cousin John Hawkins’ expeditions, Francis Drake had no love for the Spanish. He was willing to circumnavigate the globe in order to rob them of their riches and deliver them to Elizabeth, who was delighted with his exploits, and continued to commission him to undertake raids on Spanish ports.

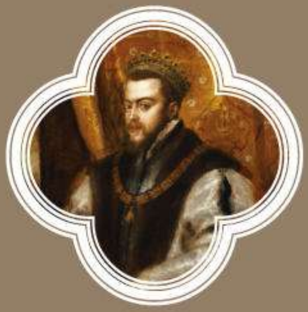


Walter Raleigh

1554-1618

Raleigh gained Elizabeth’s favour at court and quickly set his sights on expanding her empire. He decided he would establish Britain’s first colony in North America, and told the Queen it would be named after her: Virginia. To his great dismay, the colony at Roanoke failed. He is often falsely credited with bringing potatoes and tobacco to England.

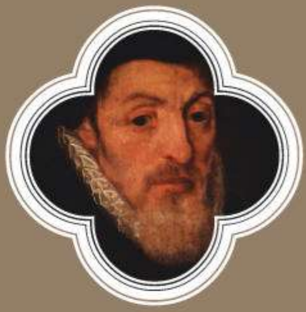
Enemies



King Philip II

1527-1598

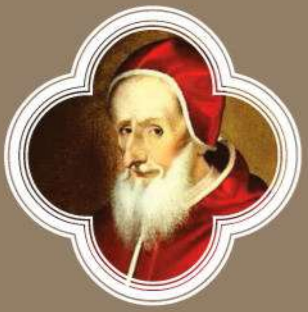
The main religious threat to Elizabeth for the majority of her realm came from the King of Spain. The Pope might have given the bull that deposed Elizabeth but the fiercely Catholic Philip was the man with the army that could enforce it. He had attempted to woo the princess while still married to her sister but, once rebuffed, relentlessly opposed her.



John Whitgift

1530-1604

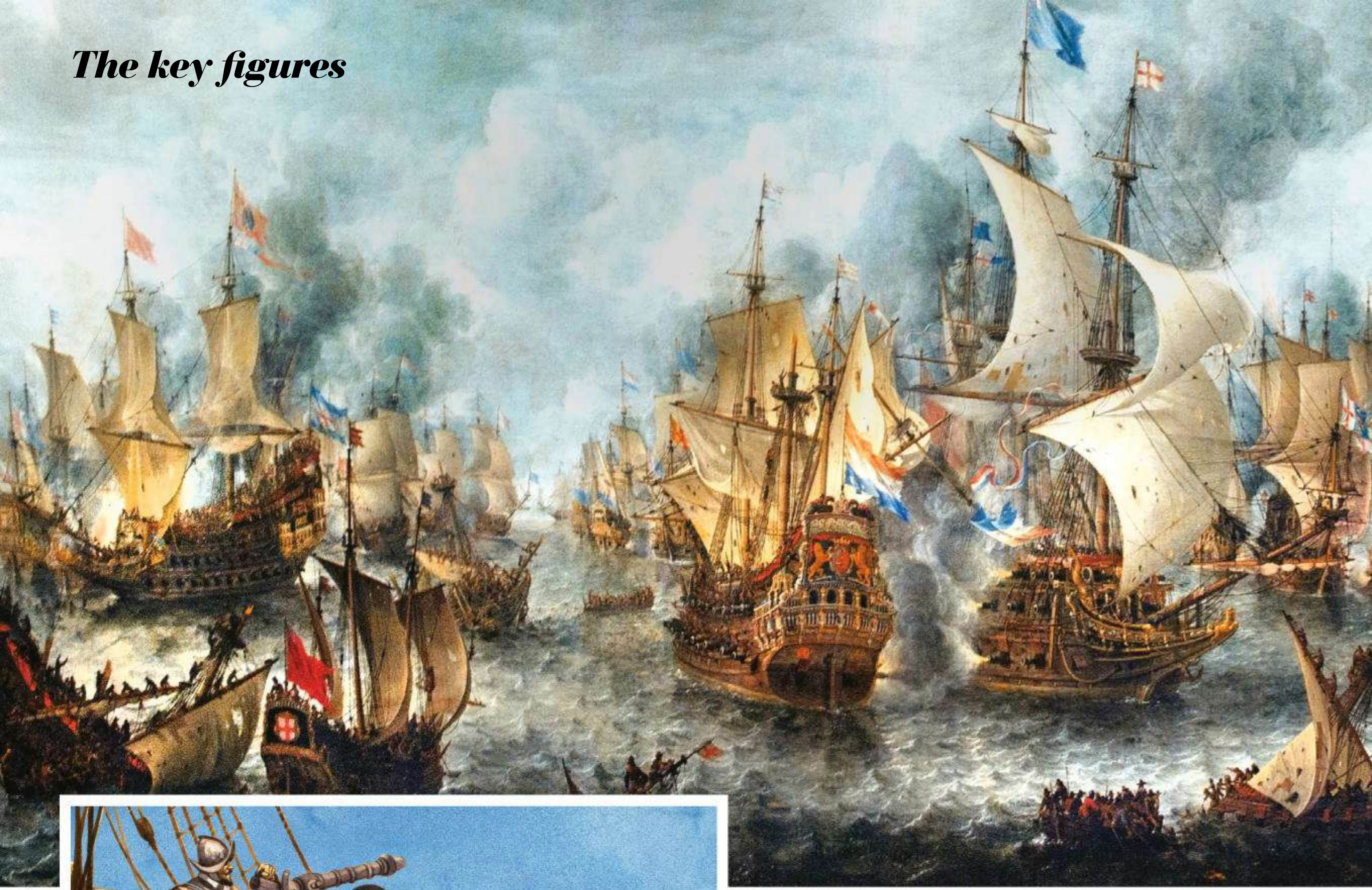
As the issue of religious tolerance became increasingly difficult to manage, Elizabeth hand-picked her old chaplain for the role of Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a stubborn man, as evidenced by his refusal to leave England during Queen Mary’s reign. Like Elizabeth, he was a Conformist and ruthlessly punished those who publicly strayed from the 'right' path.



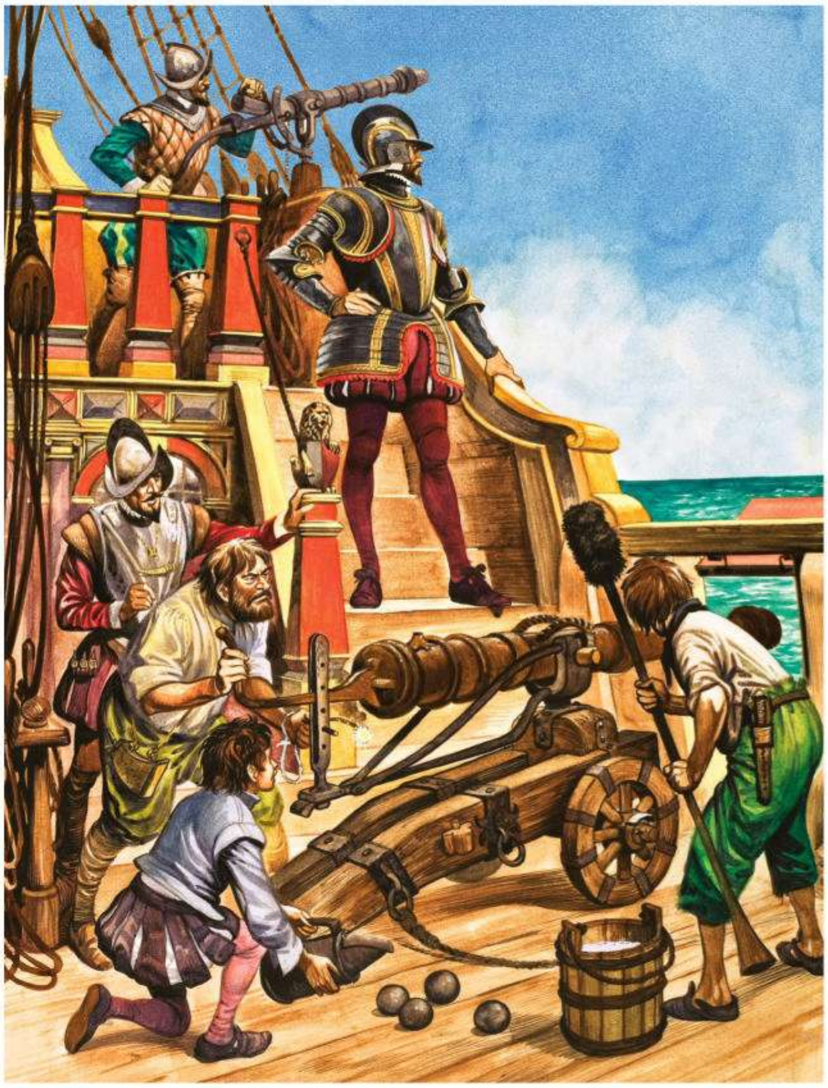
Pope Pius V

1504-72

As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Pius V saw Elizabeth’s status of Queen of England and head of its church not only as an affront to his religion, but as an act of heresy. He went as far as to issue a Papal Bull on 27 April 1570, which declared that her subjects no longer owed her any kind of allegiance.



The Spanish Armada is sent into disarray by English fireships on 8 August 1588



The gun crew on an Elizabethan ship. She funded the journeys of numerous privateers

to say she regretted their deaths. She would have preferred to have Mary murdered, for example, as she made very clear.

It is also notable that she was quite ruthless in ordering the deaths of traitors of humble birth - the 900 or so executed after the Northern Rebellion testifies to that. This was three times the numbers Henry VIII had executed after the far more serious Pilgrimage of Grace, and ten times the numbers Mary executed after Wyatt's revolt."

Mary's execution provided Philip II with the reason he needed to declare war and his Spanish Armada co-ordinated with the Duke of Parma's forces in the Netherlands, with the two forces meeting before sailing on England.

They launched on 12 July 1588, their forces possessing more than twice the number of English ships, but the English ships did have some advantages; they were smaller, faster, and designed to carry guns rather than men. The English ships could outmanoeuvre the Spanish fleet in open water and began to engage them in small skirmishes. It was at this point that Elizabeth rode out to meet her troops. With the threat of a Catholic force at their doorstep, the queen rallied the spirit

> "The queen rallied the spirit of the English troops by declaring that she would fight by their side"

of the English troops by declaring that she would fight by their side to repel anyone who dared to set foot on their land.

This grandstanding was impressive and may have gone down in history's annals but was ultimately unnecessary. The Spanish Armada failed and Elizabeth's victory was the seal on her status. 'The Golden Age' had begun, where art and literature flowered. With England a visibly powerful state, the aristocracy began to patronise the arts with great abandon.

The famous playwrights of the age enjoyed patronage, albeit with some caveats. When Shakespeare wrote Richard II he was encouraged to remove a scene suggesting the ageing monarch should step aside. "Elizabeth did not care for plays," confirms de Lisle: "All too often they were used to lecture her on this or that."

Her crown may have been safe for now, but she received devastating blows with the deaths of two of her most trusted advisors, Dudley and Walsingham. Dudley was replaced at court by his handsome stepson, the Earl of Essex, and the young flatterer quickly became her favourite.

"Robert Dudley's death in 1588 signalled the passing of the old order, but Elizabeth still hoped she could continue ruling according to her motto, 'Semper Eadem' ('Always the same')" explains de Lisle. "As the years began to pass and her servants died she either did not replace them or find a near-equivalent to the servant she had lost." It's a sign of how much she leaned on her old guard that she continued to place her trust in William

Did England become a nation to be feared?

Elizabeth's foreign policy was decidedly more cautious than expansive. She was desperate to avoid conflict because it was expensive and the outcome always uncertain. However, she had a spirit that could easily be won over by the idea of adventure. She delighted in the expeditions of John Hawkins and Francis Drake, which could be seen to be aggravating the King of Spain without actually declaring open conflict. In 1562, she agreed to a military expedition in Calais, which was crushed by Catherine de' Medici's forces, and this failure would influence her military decisions for the rest of her reign.

"There was no glory in it for Elizabeth as there was for a male monarch," Leanda de Lisle reveals. "She understood the truth of the adage of Mary of Hungary: that war made it impossible for a woman to rule effectively, 'all she can do is shoulder responsibility for mistakes committed by others.'"

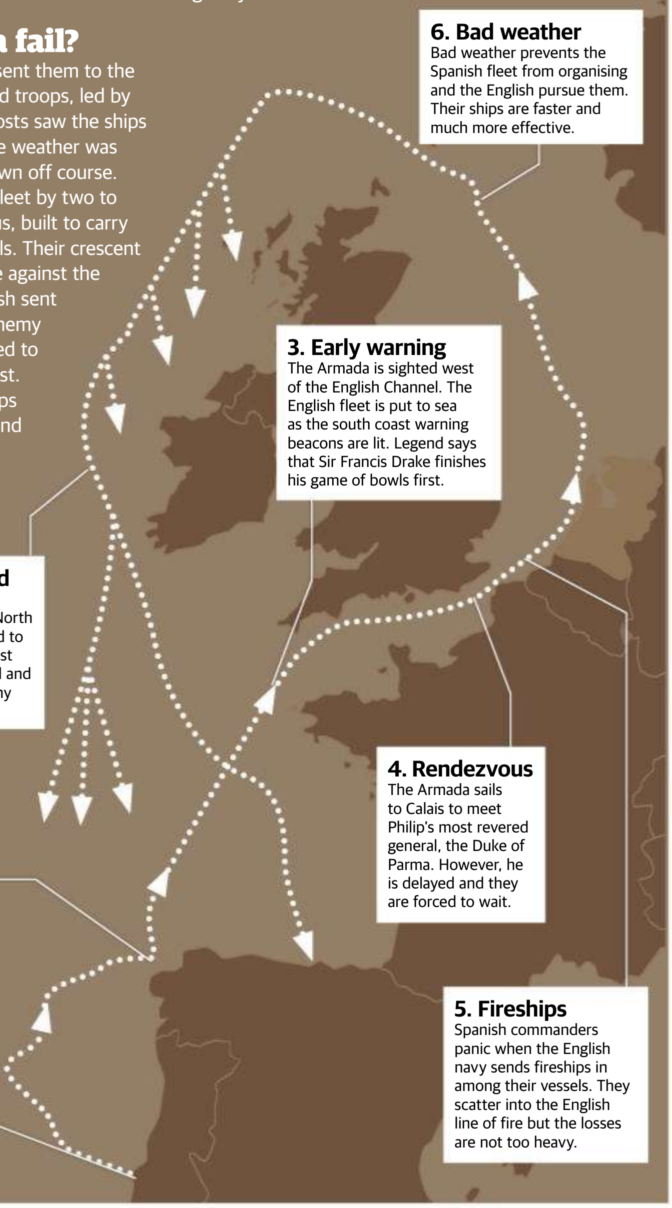
Her ally and enemy lines were drawn by religion. France and Spain were clearly opposed to England on these grounds, which is why her courtiers were so anxious that Elizabeth marry an eligible man from either country. Even after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, Elizabeth was reluctant to be drawn into open war. The piecemeal way in which she gave the Dutch her assistance shows her reluctance to engage in open conflict of any kind, first offering financial support to the Dutch troops, then the Duke of Anjou, before finally agreeing to send an English force when there was no other option. Her cautious attitude towards foreign policy doubtless saved the kingdom a lot of money. However, it was taken out of her hands when the Spanish Armada sailed on England."

Verdict

The victory against the Armada was a shining moment but for the most part Elizabeth kept out of foreign conflict. When she didn't, she regularly suffered defeats.

Why did the Armada fail?

King Philip amassed his Armada and sent them to the Netherlands to join up with his ground troops, led by the Duke of Parma. The English outposts saw the ships coming and alerted the admiralty. The weather was against the Spanish, as they were blown off course. While they outnumbered the British fleet by two to one, the Spanish ships were enormous, built to carry troops that could board enemy vessels. Their crescent formation was famous, but it did little against the smaller English ships. When the English sent fireships into the Spanish fleet, the enemy panicked and scattered. They managed to regroup for one confrontation, and lost. The Spanish retreated, with many ships crashing on the rocks of the English and Irish coastline.



1. Armada sets sail
On 28 May 1588, Philip is ready to begin his invasion of England. He gathers his Armada and they sail from Lisbon.

2. Delays
Severe weather forces Philip to dock in Coruna to make repairs to his fleet. He is delayed by more than a month.

3. Early warning
The Armada is sighted west of the English Channel. The English fleet is put to sea as the south coast warning beacons are lit. Legend says that Sir Francis Drake finishes his game of bowls first.

4. Rendezvous
The Armada sails to Calais to meet Philip's most revered general, the Duke of Parma. However, he is delayed and they are forced to wait.

5. Fireships
Spanish commanders panic when the English navy sends fireships in among their vessels. They scatter into the English line of fire but the losses are not too heavy.

6. Bad weather
Bad weather prevents the Spanish fleet from organising and the English pursue them. Their ships are faster and much more effective.

7. Ships wrecked
The weather blows the Spanish fleet into the North Sea and they are forced to retreat up England's east coast, beyond Scotland and down past Ireland. Many ships are wrecked.

Cecil, even though he was almost entirely deaf and increasingly ill. It was only when he died in 1598 that Elizabeth finally agreed to appoint Robert Cecil to his father's old post. When it became known that the Spanish were attempting to rebuild their fleet, Essex led a fleet on Cadiz and decimated their forces in port. The success gave Essex fame, something Elizabeth was taken aback by. She tried to curb him, aware that her standing among the people was her greatest asset, but Essex continued to promote his own celebrity. She became more and more frustrated with his outrageous behaviour at court, which came to a dramatic head when he half-drew his sword on her in a fit of pique.

The arts and literature may have been flourishing, but those who subscribe to this being a golden age in England's history often forget that even after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, other uprisings, such as the 1598 Irish rebellion, occurred. The country had long been a problem for Tudor England, which had attempted to impose English values and had seen the Irish as tenants on English territory. Now, with a Spanish-backed uprising, Elizabeth needed to take decisive action.

> "She wooed her people with smiles, words of love and great showmanship, and so won their hearts"

Did peace reign in England?

The early years of Elizabeth's reign were extremely unstable. The Catholics regarded her as a heretical bastard without a just claim to the throne, and she had to prove to her people that she was capable of ruling alone. Conspiracies at home and abroad plotted to remove her from the throne, and when Mary, Queen of Scots took refuge in England, her Catholic enemies finally had someone to rally around. 1569 saw her face the first real uprising with the Northern Rebellion. The Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland rallied the rebel aristocracy around them, but they were not prepared for the force of her reprisal.

In her later years she saw rebellion rear its head again as Essex overstepped his bounds. With famine and overcrowded of cities, Elizabeth's position became unstable once again. "Imagine if Elizabeth had died in October 1562 when she had smallpox," asks de Lisle: "Elizabeth had been on the throne almost four years: only a year short of her sister's reign. If she died, as many feared she would, how would her reign have been remembered? Elizabeth's religious settlement was not viewed as settled by anyone save the Queen. One of her own bishops called it 'a leaden mediocrity'. In military matters, while Mary I's loss of Calais is still remembered, Elizabeth's failed efforts to recover Calais by taking Le Havre and using it as a bargaining tool are completely forgotten. The campaign had ended that August 1562, with the huge loss of 2,000 men."

Verdict

Elizabeth's reign featured numerous rebellions and uprisings, but this was not unusual for a Tudor monarch, and given the religious uncertainty in the country at the time, she handled the uprisings quickly and decisively.

Rebellions against Elizabeth

When Elizabeth ascended to the throne she immediately faced the threat of rebellion from the Catholic nobility, who resented the fact that she was turning away from the changes made by her sister Mary. The first great uprising came in 1569, when the northern noblemen took advantage of the return of Mary, Queen of Scots to England, and attempted to overthrow her. The Duke of Norfolk, unhappy with being sidelined by the Earl of Dudley, entertained a marriage plot with Mary, while the northern Earls mounted rebellion. It was summarily crushed and hundreds were executed.

The Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's great favourite, attempted a rebellion in 1601 after he was stripped of his powers in an attempt to gain power. In line with his apparently oversized ego, he overestimated his personal popularity, the people's dissatisfaction with their monarch and his Queen's capacity for forgiveness for one of her former favourites. When Elizabeth was confronted with open defiance she rarely hesitated to crush it. She understood when to be brutal and when to charm. With the rebellions against her she was unforgiving and generally unsparing, meting out punishments swiftly and unsparingly to rebels and traitors.

She sent her army at the start of 1599, led by Essex, who was looking to prove himself once more. He was a disaster. Rather than confronting Tyrone on the battlefield, he met him in secret and returned to England having made a treaty without the queen's authority.

When Essex thought Cecil was plotting against him, he rushed to plead his case. Assuming he was still the queen's favourite, he burst into her bedchamber while she was preparing for the day. He had seen Elizabeth without her make-up and regal dressing; not as a queen but as an old woman. She could not afford to be seen like this. The queen dismissed him before summoning him later to confront him with his failures and strip him of power. Rather than accepting his fate, Essex attempted rebellion. He assumed Londoners would back the popular war hero, but Elizabeth proclaimed him a traitor and sent her troops to meet him. The rebellion was a failure and Essex was executed as a traitor.

Although the later years of Elizabeth's reign were far from golden, she could still rally her people when needed. The war in Ireland was expensive and unsuccessful, while overcrowding and failed harvests caused agitation. When Parliament publicly condemned her for granting monopolies to her favourite courtiers, which had led to price-fixing, Elizabeth was forced to address them in 1601. She agreed to put a stop to the monopolies and she reaffirmed her love for England. She won over Parliament, there was a good harvest, and a truce was reached in Ireland and Spain. "Elizabeth, old and ill, did lose some of her former grip, but never entirely," states de Lisle. "She had followed Mary I's example in wooing the common people from the beginning of her reign, and they continued to support her."

Having seen off another uprising, the 50-year-old monarch's health was failing and after an all-too-rare period of good health, Elizabeth grew sickly. She was desperately frustrated by Cecil's growing

Elizabeth's golden moments

1550
1555
1560
1565
1570
1575
1580
1585
1590
1595
1600
1605

1. 1559
Elizabeth is crowned Queen of England. Everyone watches to see if she displays a Protestant leaning but the ceremony is ambiguous.

2. 1566
Elizabeth announces to a Parliament desperate to see her choose a husband that she is married to England.

3. 1569
The Northern Rebellion is crushed. Elizabeth brutally punishes those responsible and sends a shocking reminder to anyone who would challenge her.

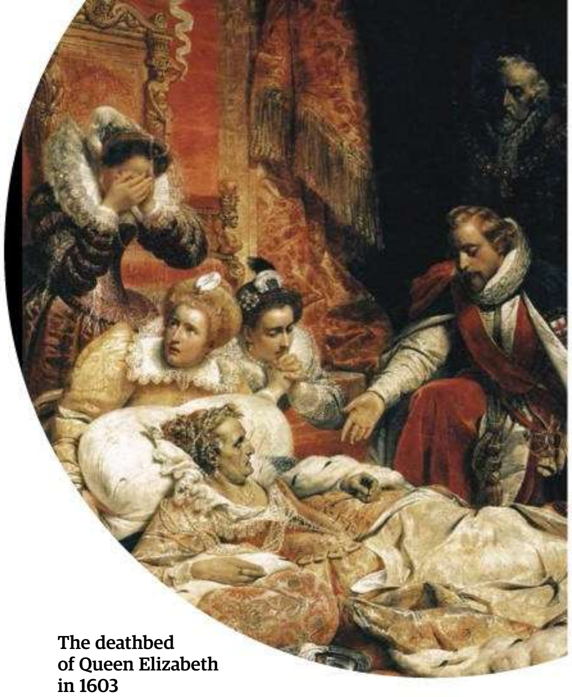
4. 1577
Francis Drake circumnavigates the globe and returns with boats filled with riches stolen from the King of Spain.

5. 1587
Elizabeth is forced to execute Mary, Queen of Scots, which is the final straw for Catholic Spain.

6. 1588
The Spanish Armada sails for England, but is decisively defeated. Elizabeth delivers her famous Tilbury speech from horseback, which becomes legend.

7. 1601
Following famine and controversy over her granting monopolies to her favourites, Elizabeth gives her 'Golden Speech' to a furious Parliament and wins them over.

© Joe Cummings; Mary Evans; Look and Learn; Alamy; Getty



The deathbed of Queen Elizabeth in 1603

power over her and refused to go to bed as she realised that the end was coming soon. Elizabeth finally died on 23 March 1603. Although she had struggled to change with the times in the face of younger, ambitious advisors, she had been a formidable political operator. She had still shown the cunning and cleverness to understand her situation, and had never lost the image of a queen loved by her people.

"That image was not created for her," explains de Lisle. "Elizabeth never forgot the events of 1553 when the ordinary people had backed the Tudor sisters, while the political elite had supported Jane Grey. Nor did she forget how in 1554, Mary had made a speech at the Guildhall that roused London in her defence against the Wyatt rebellion. Mary had spoken of her marriage to her kingdom, describing her coronation ring as a wedding band, and her love of her subjects as that of a mother for her children. These were the phrases and motifs Elizabeth would use repeatedly and would become absolutely central to her reign.

In addition, Elizabeth also had an instinct for the crowd's demands. Even her enemies would admit she had 'the power of enchantment'. She wooed her people with smiles, words of love and great showmanship, and so won their hearts. Elizabeth's people would never forget her. When she died and James I become king, people hugely missed the Tudor theatre of reciprocal love, of which Elizabeth had been the last and brightest star."

Elizabeth's reign was not the golden age that legend so often depicts; she faced serious uprisings, both internal and external, during her reign. She was capable of heartlessness and ruthlessness, and could be indecisive and impetuous. During the course of her rule, England saw famine, rebellion and war. However, there's no mistaking her dedication to her country and her determination to listen to what the people wanted from her – and then give it to them. She walked a political tightrope for most of her life, and the fact that she died peacefully in her bed as queen was a major triumph in itself. The English people loved her, and she, in turn, loved them. In the hearts and minds of many of her subjects, she was – and will always be – Britain's golden monarch.

1532 – 1590

Sir Francis Walsingham

Discover the extreme lengths Elizabeth's spymaster was willing to go to in order to protect the Virgin Queen from plotters and foreign powers

The Elizabethan era is often seen as a golden age for England. The Virgin Queen offered stability after the bloody reigns of her brother and sister, Edward VI and Mary I. This led to a flourishing of literarure, art and music, with Shakespeare performing regularly in London. England also established its first colony, following Sir Walter Raleigh's exploration of the New World. However, the truth is that 16th-century England was the centre of a web of political intrigue. Elizabeth I was in constant danger of plots to overthrow her, with discontented Catholics who wanted to see an end to Protestant rule. These plotters were often in league with the most powerful nations in Europe, including Spain, France and the Papacy, all of whom had spies in the Queen's court.

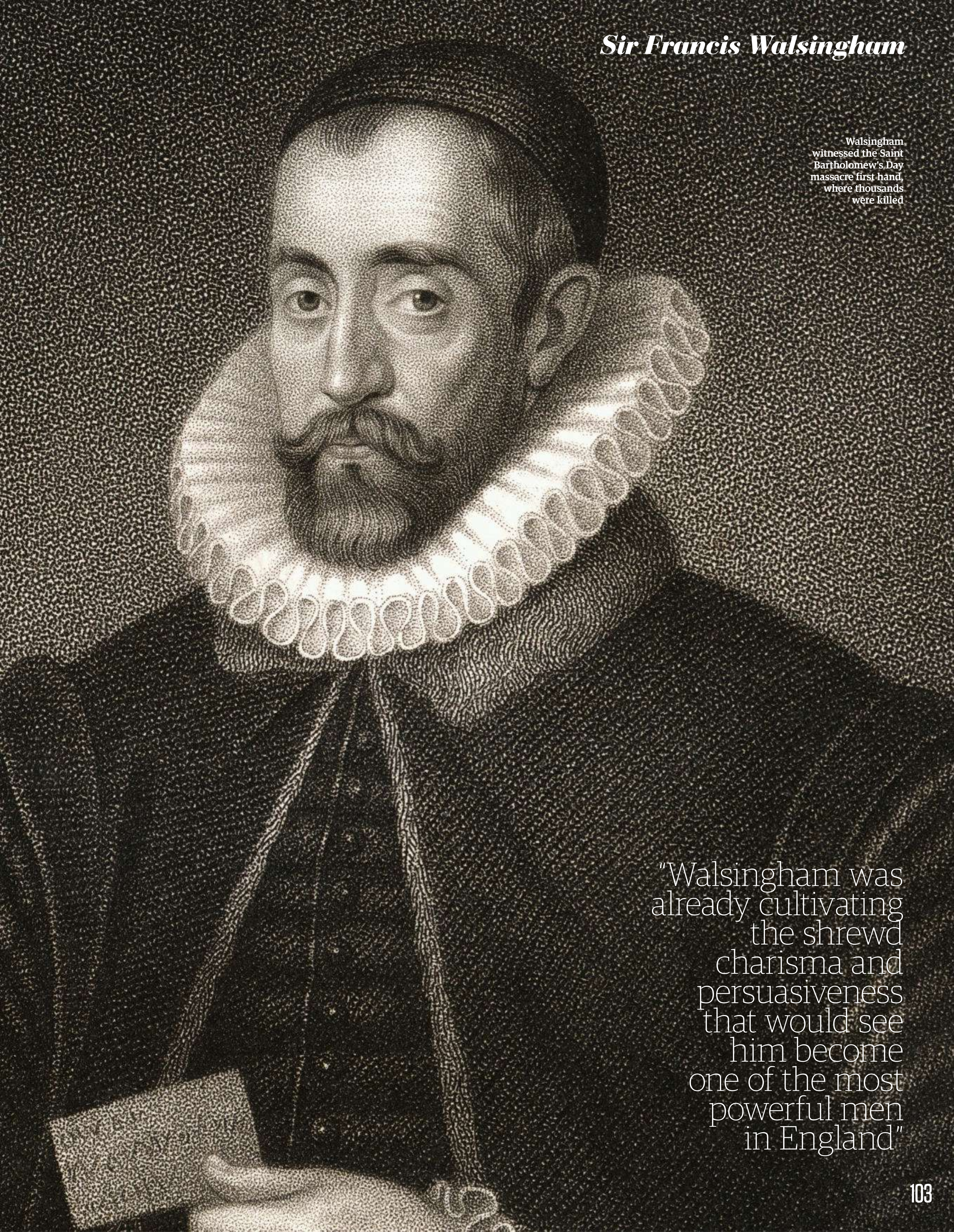
Fortunately, England had its own man in the shadows, a pioneer that would set the standard for secret intelligence for centuries. But like so many spies living on the edge, this man and his agents would blur the line between right and wrong to protect queen and country.

Francis Walsingham was born into a well-connected family – one of many that who had found their wealth in the capital, then moved out and established themselves as landed gentry in the countryside. His father was a well-connected lawyer but he died when Francis was only two years old. His mother quickly remarried to Sir John Carey, a relation of Anne Boleyn through marriage. His strong familial links placed young Walsingham right in the centre of the most powerful players in England at the time.

Walsingham experienced a privileged education but like many staunch Protestants, he had to flee the country when the zealous Catholic Mary Tudor ascended the throne. During this period he lived in Italy, developing his language abilities and, more importantly, his people skills. This was the first time he had been able to meet and converse with all different kinds of people and he would later comment that it was important to take note of the "manners and dispositions" of people from all walks of life. Walsingham was already cultivating the shrewd charisma and persuasiveness that would see him become one of the most powerful men in England.

When Elizabeth was crowned in 1558, it was finally safe for Walsingham to return to the country. Only a few months later, he was elected as a member of parliament, though he had very little

"England had its own man in the shadows, a pioneer that would set the standard for secret intelligence for centuries"



Walsingham witnessed the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre first-hand, where thousands were killed

"Walsingham was already cultivating the shrewd charisma and persuasiveness that would see him become one of the most powerful men in England" enthusiasm for this role despite holding it until his death. There was something he did have an interest in, however, and with Elizabeth's ascension the age of it had begun – espionage.

England's relationship with Spain had been good under Mary I – she had even attempted a marriage with King Philip – and there was talk of Elizabeth continuing this trend. However, this was not to be. Rather than strengthening the bond between the two nations, the countries drifted further apart. Of course, the very Catholic king of Spain was not overly fond of Elizabeth's Protestant allegiances and when Protestant rebellions sparked in Spanish-owned countries, England's calls for Protestant unity were not unheard by Philip. These tensions eventually mounted into Spanish ships attacking English privateers and any chance of an amicable alliance was lost.

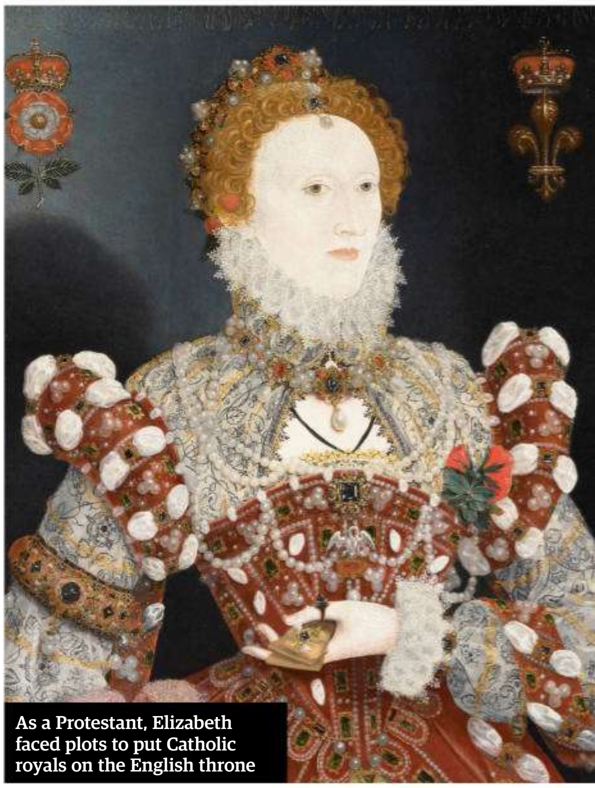
The king himself, Philip II, did little to help relations. He was an infamously suspicious man, untrusting even of his own faithful servants, and he often disgraced men and women loyal to him. He was dubbed the 'spider king' due to the many plots he would weave from the shadows.

His own court historian wrote that "his smile and his dagger were very close." This caused bitter infighting within the Spanish court, which seeped into government and the country itself. This court of distrust and betrayal created the perfect atmosphere for foreign powers to take advantage – and England intended to expose and extort of all of the king's weaknesses.

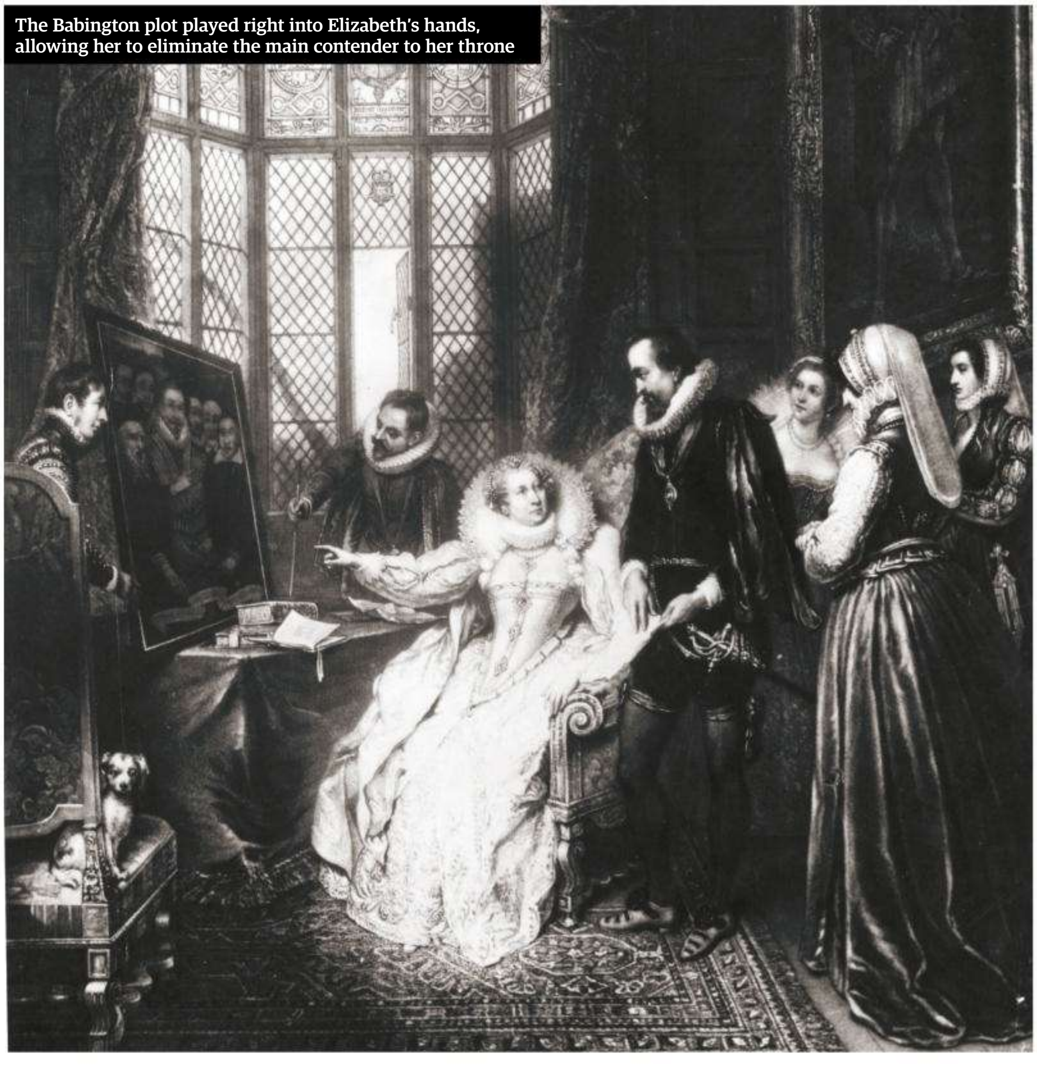
Walsingham had already been plucked by William Cecil, Elizabeth's most trusted secretary, to perform 'confidential' tasks. He was a talented linguist and used his skills to spy on foreigners in London who may have borne ill will towards the monarch. Walsingham was not only good at this – his skills were unparalleled. He developed his own resources, recruiting talented men to work for him throughout the country, as well as in the major cities of Europe.

He was already hearing whispers of a plan by Spanish and French Catholics to place the Catholic Mary Stuart – also known as Mary, Queen of Scots – on the throne and he urged Cecil to take these rumours seriously, saying that "there is less danger in fearing too much than too little." This mantra would follow him throughout his career and see him foil some of the most dangerous conspiracies against a monarch in English history.

Walsingham's persuasion skills did not go unnoticed and between 1570 and 1573 he served as the ambassador to the French court. Here he tried to obtain a union between Elizabeth and the duke of Anjou, hoping that an alliance between the two old enemies would stop France from siding with Spain against England. However, he merely became convinced that an accord between the two nations with their dividing religious beliefs was now impossible, and that instead it is "less peril to live with them as enemies, than as friends."



As a Protestant, Elizabeth faced plots to put Catholic royals on the English throne



The Babington plot played right into Elizabeth's hands, allowing her to eliminate the main contender to her throne

Walsingham knew enemies – he knew how to spy on them and how to deal with them. He knew how to be distrustful. What he wasn't so good at, however, was cultivating friendships. He was dry, dark, sallow and brutally honest with his companions. For many, Walsingham was a difficult pill to swallow and he even had fiery encounters with Elizabeth herself. However, all this was tolerated due to his supreme political and intelligence-gathering skills. Elizabeth knew she faced one of the greatest political schemers in Philip II and she needed her own weaver of plots in order to best him.

Walsingham returned to England towards the end of 1573 and was made a principal secretary, handling domestic and foreign affairs – but his attention was drawn to one very specific person. He knew that all Catholic hope now rested on Mary Stuart and as long as she remained alive, schemes would rise up to put her on the throne. Walsingham was determined to squash every single one of them.

The spymaster concentrated on expanding his ring. Walsingham had eyes not only in every major county of England, but also France, Scotland, Spain, Italy, Turkey and even as far as North Africa. It is rumoured that at one time he had 53 agents in foreign courts and 18 more with undefined roles.

> “He was a talented linguist and used his skills to spy on foreigners in London”

Almost all of these spies were Catholics willing to betray each other and he obtained his men by any means necessary. Walsingham used prison informants and double agents sourced through bribery and even threats. At home, men were trained to decipher correspondence, feigning handwriting and even in the art of repairing seals so nobody would ever know they had been tampered with.

It was the vastest and arguably most successful spy ring of the Elizabethan age and a model that would be replicated and expanded on into the 20th century. Walsingham was eventually given an annual stipend of £2,000 a year – a huge amount for the era – in order to fund his secret activities. He wasn’t the only person employing and using spies at this time, far from it, but his ring was so extensive and deployed so expertly that no one else could hope to rival it.

Walsingham’s efforts did not go unrewarded. In 1583, one of his spies in the French embassy in London caught wind of secret documents being passed through the embassy itself. The man suspected of being involved was Francis Throckmorton,and Walsingham placed him under increased surveillance. He was arrested six months later and on his person was a map of invasion ports and a list of Catholic supporters.

After some persuasive torture techniques, the details of the plan were confessed. Throckmorton was involved in a planned invasion of England by combined French and Spanish troops, as well as a planned assassination of the queen that would end by placing Mary Stuart on the throne in her place.

Not only was Throckmorton convicted of treason and executed, but the Spanish ambassador, found to be involved in the plot, was expelled from the country. The conspiracy revealed plainly that Spain was never going to be an ally to an England ruled by Elizabeth and diplomatic relations with the country were severed – no more Spanish ambassadors would be welcome in the London court. Spain was now officially an enemy.

The Throckmorton plot only served to increase Walsingham’s concerns about growing support for Mary in England, and he was right to be suspicious. Cut off from correspondence for nearly a year, Mary was eager to take advantage of a chance to send and receive her mail through beer barrels. Little did Mary know, her letters were falling right into the hands of Walsingham and his men, decoded and read in London, then sent on their way.

During this infiltration, messages were received from Anthony Babington, a wealthy Catholic gentleman who had recruited his own team

Crime and punishment

Elizabeth’s top torturer had ways of making you talk

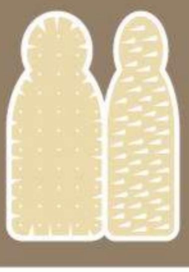
Richard Topcliffe was born into a very well connected family, with links to Anne Boleyn and Katherine Parr. When his father died young, he found himself in charge of a large and wealthy estate. A close companion of the queen, he was employed to extract ‘confessions’ through interrogation and often torture. Bashed by some as an inhumane beast capable of unimaginable cruelty, he would often attend the execution of his victims as a kind of master of ceremonies. Described as a “veteran in evil”, Topcliffe made no attempts to hide his methods but instead was immensely proud of his work.

Manacles

Prisoners were hung by the wrists in metal manacles. This procedure would last for hours at a time without any break and could cause permanent internal injury and death.

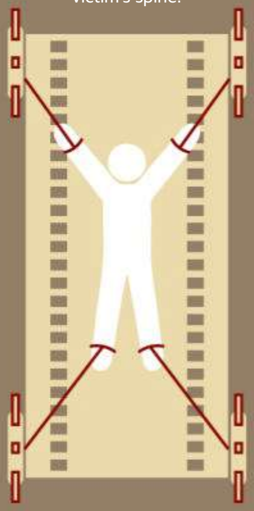
Torture machine

Somewhat of a mystery, Topcliffe was known to have his own torture chamber created in his London home. There he claimed to have a torture machine designed by himself that was apparently far more efficient at eliciting confessions.



The rack

An Elizabethan classic, a man was fastened to the contraption and very slowly and painfully stretched, causing bones to become dislocated. Topcliffe put his own spin on this by placing a large stone under the victim’s spine.

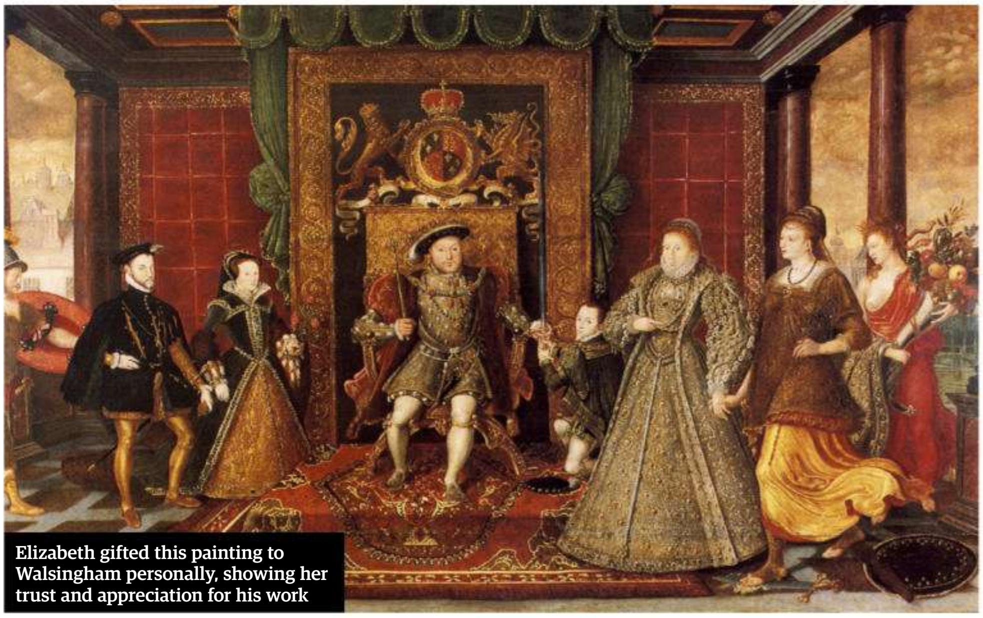


Mental torture

Not all of Topcliffe’s abuse was physical – he would also talk to and scream at his victims to break their spirit along with their body. He would lie to and berate them until they no longer knew the truth from their dark prison cell.

Rape

Although not a legal form of torture, at least one confirmed case of rape occurred during Topcliffe’s torture sessions. Either himself or one of his men raped Anne Bellamy to extract a suspect’s location. She became pregnant and was forced to marry Topcliffe’s servant to cover up the crime.



Elizabeth gifted this painting to Walsingham personally, showing her trust and appreciation for his work

The rogues gallery

Walsingham's men were spies who sold their honour and loyalty to the highest bidder

Giordano Bruno

An Italian friar, poet and philosopher, Bruno was close friends with Philip Sydney. While he was in London, it is believed that Walsingham had him deployed as a spy for the court in the French embassy. His information led to the reveal of a plot to dispose of Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Stuart.

Thomas Phelippes

Coming from humble origins as the son of a cloth merchant, Phelippes managed to climb the social ladder thanks to his amazing ability with languages. Speaking French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and German, his skills easily transferred to make him a talented cryptographer and he was snatched up by Walsingham to decipher enemy letters. His work proved that Mary Stuart was involved in a plot to oust Elizabeth, resulting in her execution.

Robert Poley

Poley's origins are swathed in mystery. In 1580, he appeared almost out of nowhere with a large amount of money. He was determined to find work as a spy and Walsingham ushered him into the network as a Catholic informer. He befriended the masterminds of the Babington plot and was monumental in its undoing.

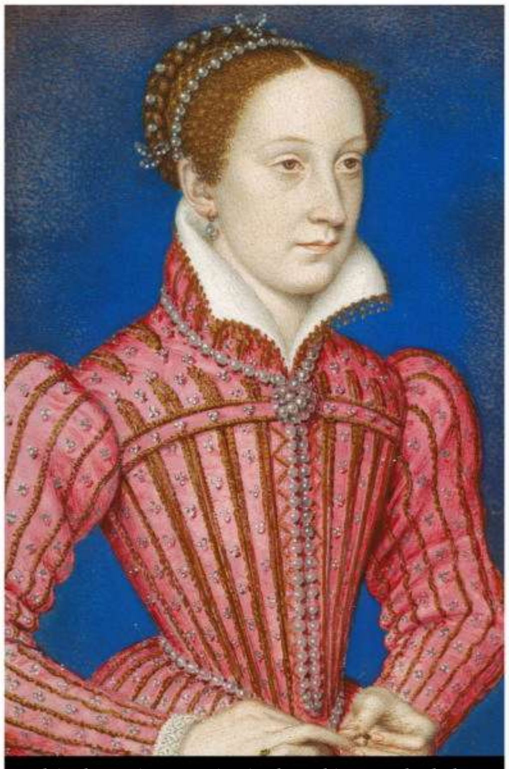
Gilbert Gifford

Born to a Catholic family, Gifford was ordained as a Catholic deacon. He was actually arrested by Walsingham but agreed to work for him as a double agent. Given the codename 'number four', he befriended Mary Stuart and secretly delivered coded letters from her to Walsingham. After the plot was revealed, he quickly fled to France and was ordained as a priest in Rheims. To this day, whether he was allied to Walsingham and Elizabeth or Mary remains a mystery.

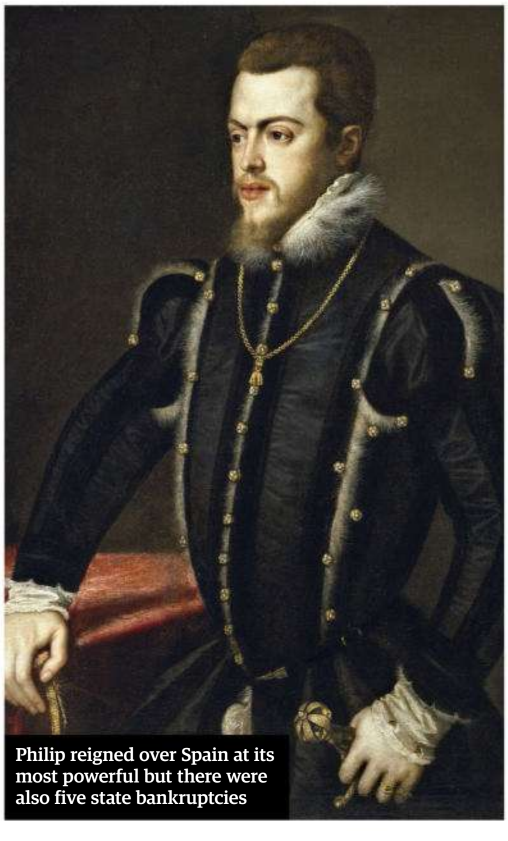
Antony Standen

Known by the alias Pompero Pellegrini, Standen was another Catholic who had been convinced by Walsingham to act as a spy. Although he was settled in France, he was able to obtain crucial information about plans for the Spanish Armada for over two years, including a list of ships, supplies and men. Despite his service to England, Standen's devotion to the Catholic Church resulted in him being imprisoned in the Tower of London.

> "Philip the spider king had given up all pretence of allying with England"



Walsingham's intervention in the Babington plot led to the downfall and execution of Mary Stuart in 1587



Philip reigned over Spain at its most powerful but there were also five state bankruptcies

with one aim in mind – assassinate Elizabeth. This society also had links with Europe and, of course, Spain. Before the plot, or the queen, could be executed, Walsingham tricked the men into revealing themselves and they were promptly rounded up and arrested. Many of the conspirators were tortured, most notably a priest, Ballard, who had to be carried to his execution in a chair as he was unable to walk.

However, the biggest success was that it directly implicated Mary herself in the scheme. Elizabeth finally had reason to act and Mary was arrested, sent to trial and found guilty. The queen then reluctantly signed her own cousin's death warrant and she was beheaded. The Catholic threat, from within England at least, was, for now, eliminated and it was all thanks to Walsingham's eyes and ears across the nation.

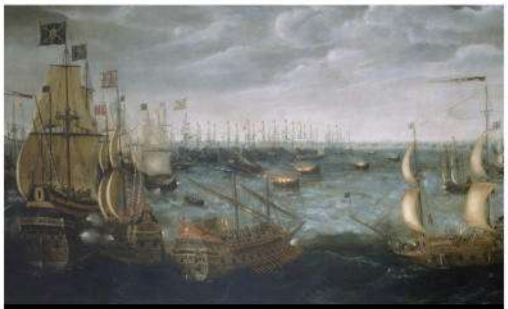
Although Walsingham was successful with foiling plots from within the nation, the threat from outside was still very real. Philip the spider king had given up all pretence of allying with England and instead set about making sure Spain would be the most powerful nation in Europe.

His most alarming action was his move to conquer Portugal by force, claiming the land was his as the recently deceased king was his childless nephew. Elizabeth, however fiery, did not wish to go to war with the nation but found herself with no option but to send troops to the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands, who were revolting against the Spanish king's hegemony. To Philip, this move was unacceptable – he believed that only by defeating England could he continue his quest for power and control over Europe.

Philip had a plan and it was a huge one. He would create an armada large and powerful enough to put a stop to England's meddling once and for all – and conquer it in the process. He did everything he could to gain Catholic support for this mission against the Protestant nation, although quite a few of these allies showed doubt if Philip's interests were truly to Catholicism or purely to Spain. However, for all intents and purposes, things were going to plan. As he rapidly built up his numbers, Philip secretly schemed the downfall of his most persistent thorns – Elizabeth and England.

England, however, was not oblivious to the spider king's plans. Walsingham had already been informed by his many spies, expertly placed in foreign courts, that Spain was planning to launch an invasion of the country. He wasn't powerful enough to stop it completely, but his intelligence meant he could certainly prepare the country and lessen the threat.

Dover Harbour was rebuilt so it was ready for an invasion and he urged his agents across the world



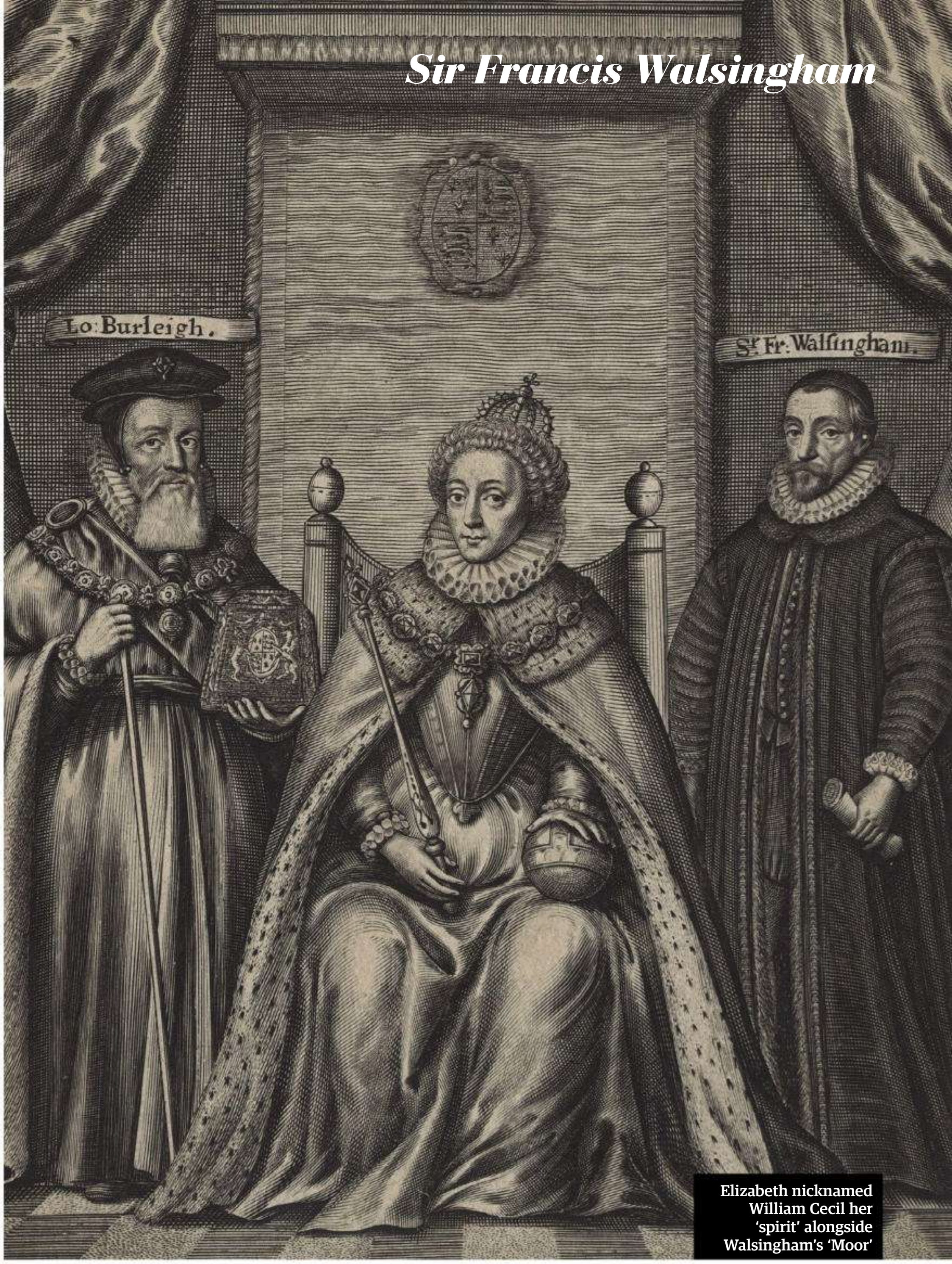
During the Armada, Elizabeth proclaimed herself to "have the heart and stomach of a king – and of a king of England, too"

to promote more aggressive strategies by attacking Spanish holdings in the hope that this would distract Spain, giving him more time to prepare. In particular, he ensured that Francis Drake's surprise raid on Cadiz would remain just that, which he did by feeding false information to the England ambassador in Paris.

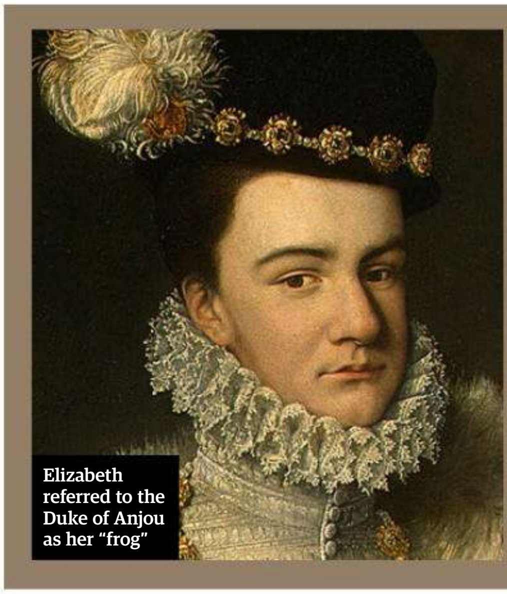
Walsingham already suspected the ambassador was working for the Spanish and, as usual, his hunch was correct. Drake's raid was a success – it wreaked havoc with the Spanish logistics and set the launch of the Armada back considerably.

When the Armada finally set sail in 1588, Walsingham already knew how many ships to expect, how many men were on board and what they were carrying. Not only was the 'moor' given frequent updates from the English Navy, but he even raised his own land defence, should it get that far, with 260 men at his command.

When the Armada was vanquished in August 1588, the naval commander Lord Henry Seymour wrote to Walsingham, "You have fought more with your pen than many have in our English navy fought with their enemies." For now, at least, the Spanish threat was crushed but Philip would continue to set his sights on England for years to come. However, as long as Walsingham and his spies were listening in the shadows, Elizabeth would be one step ahead of the spider king's ploys.


Lo: Burleigh.
Sr Fr: Walſingham.

Elizabeth nicknamed William Cecil her 'spirit' alongside Walsingham's 'Moor'



Elizabeth referred to the Duke of Anjou as her "frog"

The queen and her moor

Despite the fact that Walsingham likely saved the queen's life countless times by thwarting conspiracies aimed to eliminate her, their relationship was complicated. It is no great secret that Elizabeth was a larger-than-life personality – loud, brash and outspoken – and she didn't mince her words. Although she famously never married, Elizabeth was particularly fond of men and her support structure was composed pretty much entirely of them. She liked men who cooed over her, and especially ones who said what she wanted to hear. Walsingham, however, was not one of them.

The two of them frequently disagreed on policy. Walsingham was very direct, honest and rather passionate about his opinions. For one, he was convinced that a marriage that Elizabeth sought between herself and Francis, the duke of Anjou, was not a wise idea. In fact, he opposed the union so adamantly that when he failed to secure it, Elizabeth furiously dismissed him from court for several months.

Despite these fiery encounters, Elizabeth was not a fool – she saw how talented and vital Walsingham was to her court and gave him role after role of pivotal responsibility in both domestic and foreign affairs, even trusting him to talk on her behalf with foreign ambassadors.

Elizabeth often mocked Walsingham's zealous beliefs and sober demeanour, even calling him a rank Puritan. But she did give him one of her nicknames, calling him her "moor" as a result of his dark appearance. The queen's nicknames, though often appearing derivative, were saved solely for those she was fondest of, so it is clear she had some affection for Walsingham.

Although their relationship may have been rocky, the queen valued him for his trustworthiness, honesty and council and even his dry humour. Over time, rather than fighting against Walsingham, Elizabeth accepted her spymaster for who he was – "her Moor [who] cannot change his colour."

Tudor life

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His plays were attended by people of all classes, but was he hiding an important message within their words?

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Peek inside the waiting room of the gruesome and bloody barber-surgeon

> “There was much more to life in Tudor England than the exploits of kings, queens and the royal court”

© Sol90 Images; Alamy

Life in Tudor court

For those living close to the king or queen, rich rewards were on offer. But displease a royal, or attract an enemy, and heads would almost certainly roll

Richard III was relaxing in Nottingham Castle, the imposing fortification perched on a raised mass of land in the midlands of England. Its impregnable walls made the Yorkist king feel safe, but with 30 years of conflict blighting the land as the Houses of Lancaster and York clashed ferociously for the right to rule, trouble was always around the corner.

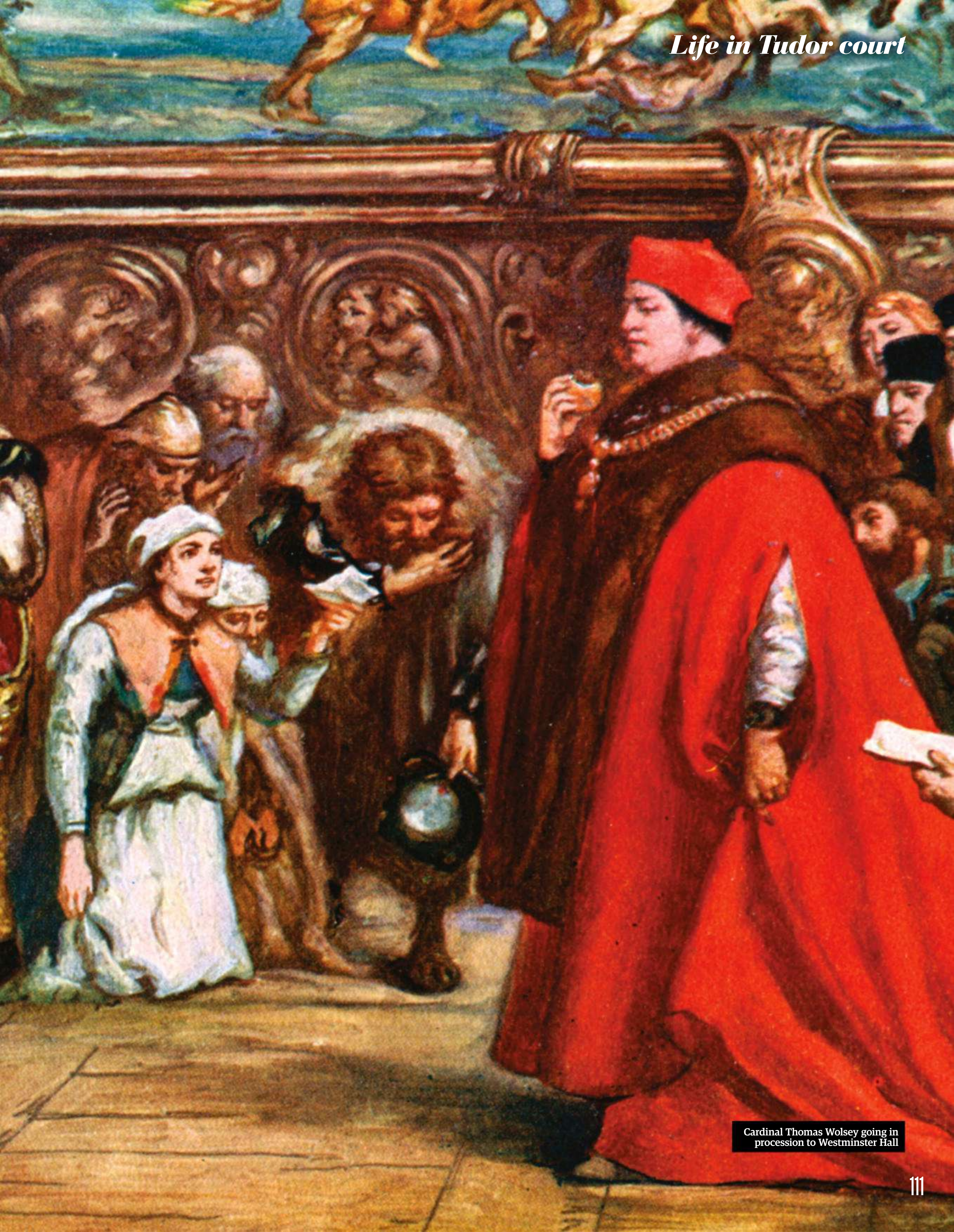
So it was that Henry Tudor was visiting France, hoping to secure war money from the French king, Charles VIII. As the son of the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt - the fourth son of King Edward III - Henry was about to stake his claim to the English crown. Within days, he and a strong army had landed at a Welsh port. Richard III had no choice but to send 12,000 troops to meet them.

The two sides met at Bosworth in England on 22 August 1485 and they were drawn into a bloody battle. With casualties rapidly building up and crimson red spilling to the ground, Richard III seized his chance. He charged across the battlefield in an attempt to slay Henry, but he failed. It was a vital mistake. A section of army belonging to Sir William Stanley, a man with an eye for backing a victor, turned on the king and killed him. The way was paved for a new dynasty of rulers and Henry Tudor would become King Henry VII.

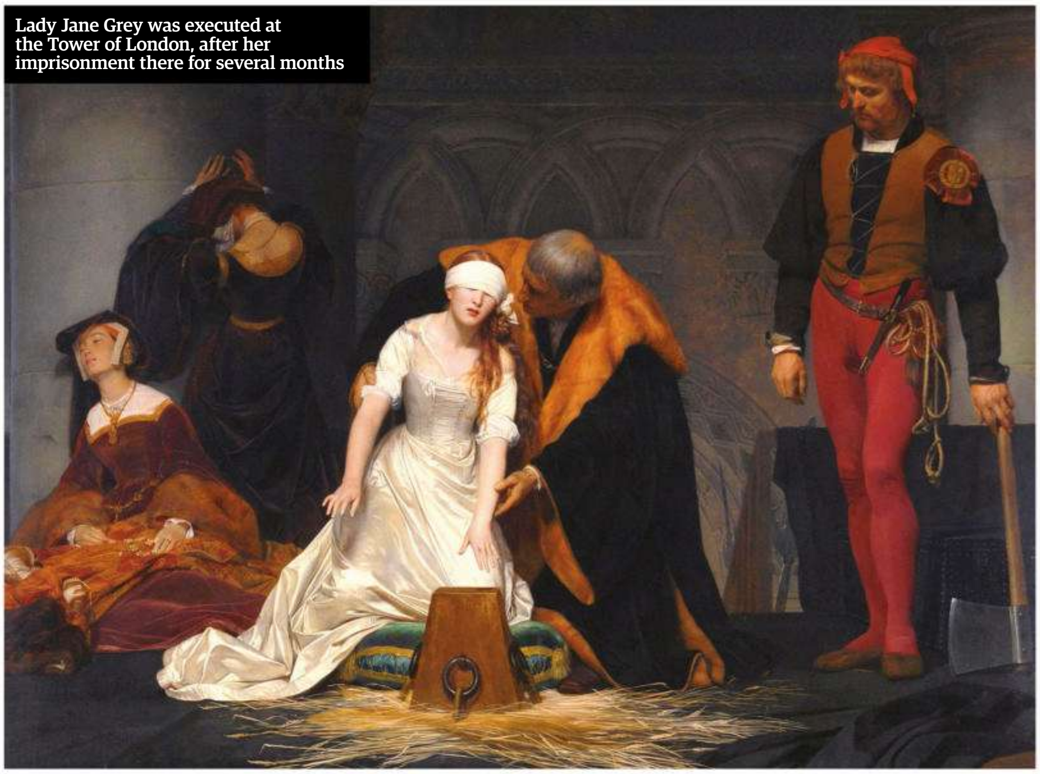
Almost immediately, the new Tudor ruler sought stability, knowing it was vital if he was to hold on to the throne. As well as banning rich nobles from owning their own armies, he built around him a strong and sizable court. Believing it important to bring England's wealthiest individuals closer to the seat of power, and handing out important roles, Henry VII gained the support of around a thousand people, each one influential and of high-birth. They helped him fix a financially broken England and backed his austerity measures. The court also helped to build a country free from international war; one that was open to foreign trade.

Henry VII sought intellect among his courtiers, with literature and music coming to dominate. The king surrounded himself with poets and sculptors - among them Pietro Torrigiano, who created a bust of Henry - and he also enjoyed the company of scientists, humanists and historians. William Caxton, who had been a supporter of the York faction and was appointed Governor of the English merchants under the Yorkist king Edward IV, was nevertheless supported by Henry, who recognised his stature as the first printer of England. Such people would also come into contact with Henry's son - his successor Henry VIII - and they would shape the future king's cultural outlook.

> Food for courtiers became more interesting and exotic as the decades rolled by, thanks to further world exploration



Cardinal Thomas Wolsey going in procession to Westminster Hall



Lady Jane Grey was executed at the Tower of London, after her imprisonment there for several months

Even so, political strife was never too far away and those attracted to the court often caused jealousy. “The king has the greatest desire to employ foreigners, but can not do so for the envy of the English is diabolical,” a Spanish resident noted. “They have an antipathy to foreigners, and imagine that they never come into their island, but to make themselves masters of it, and to usurp their goods,” a Venetian quipped. It wasn’t long, therefore, before factions emerged, with various groups of individuals coming together with a common purpose and willing to do all they could to get their ideas through. Combined with the general paranoia felt by many of the royals during the Tudor era, these groups felt they could influence the thinking of kings and queens. In doing so, they created incredible tension, not only within the ruled lands but overseas too. The court became both a desirable and treacherous place.

Lord Chamberlain was the most important court figure, overseeing its overall business

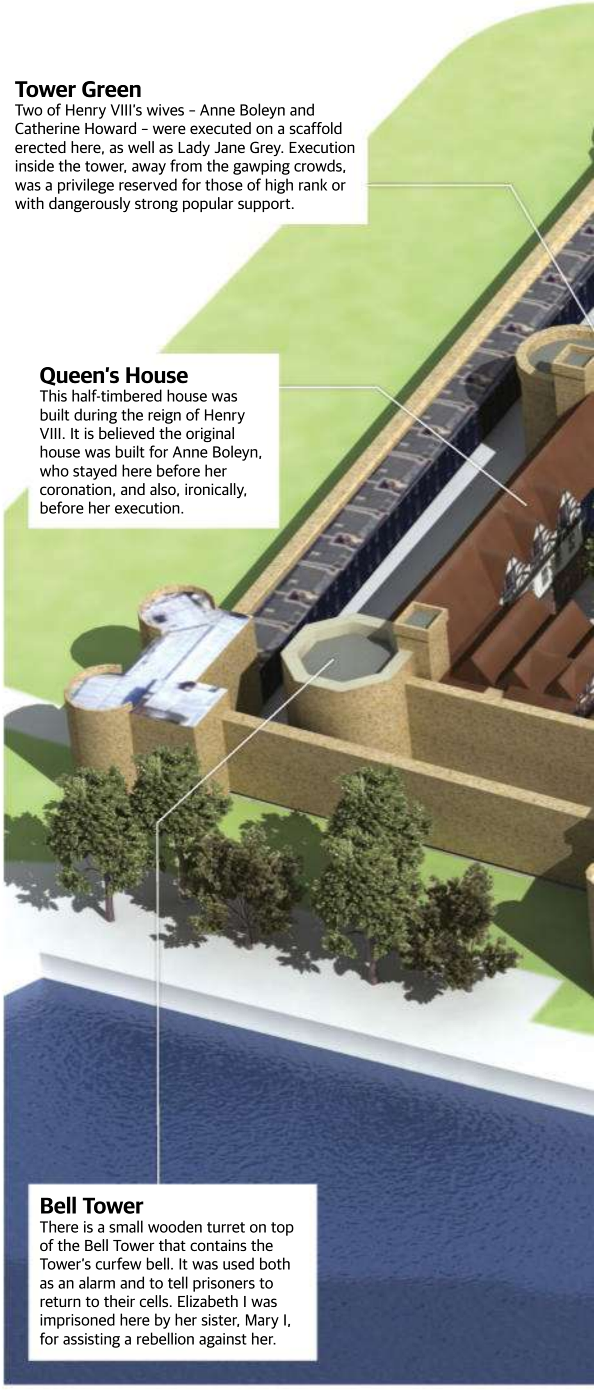
To become close to a king or queen – or at least close to someone close to a king or queen – would allow a courtier a sense of success and boost their chances of privilege and wealth. As the commoners outside the court farmed the land, traded in market towns and worked their fingers to the bone to scrape a living, the landowners, merchants, lawyers, noblemen and learned scholars were among those seeking patronage and power.

The two sets of lives could not have been more disparate and it was very easy to spot the difference in stature. As the public wore clothing made from cheap material, the male courtiers would wear attractive patterned shirts created in wool, linen or silk, over which would be a jacket. They would also wear hose. The women would don lavish velvet or silk gowns that flowed to the floor, and their hair would be swept beneath a French hood. The court was a rich place to be.

Bishop Thomas Ruthall knew this more than most. He had amassed great wealth from land that exceeded the cash being generated for the king. Cardinal Thomas Wolsey also noted the trappings that court life offered, not that it was ever hidden. The problem for Wolsey was that he was a man of lower-birth, the son of an Ipswich butcher. His intellect was so great that he had been able to better himself through the church. He graduated from Oxford, becoming a royal chaplain and gaining himself a place on the King’s Council. He would become Archbishop of York and a cardinal, and the king passed much of the work of running the realm to him, which gave him power, influence and wealth.

Henry VIII welcomed Wolsey, not minding his social climbing and actually believing it to be a bonus. The king was paranoid about the influence some of the noblemen and wealthy courtiers had on those around him and he felt that Wolsey would be more grateful for his place within court circles. Yet the nobles resented Wolsey’s success and they repeatedly clashed with him. Wolsey would often use his intellect to humiliate them.

He believed the nobles to be inferior and lucky to have power only through birth and not graft and intelligence. For Bishop Ruthall, pushed aside by Wolsey, the animosity could not have been greater. Ruthall worked under Wolsey and hated being accountable to him. On one occasion Wolsey asked for a survey of the royal revenues, but Ruthall accidentally presented him with an inventory of his own fortune. Wolsey delighted in showing the king, and the stress of the disclosure caused much ill-health for Ruthall, who died as a result.

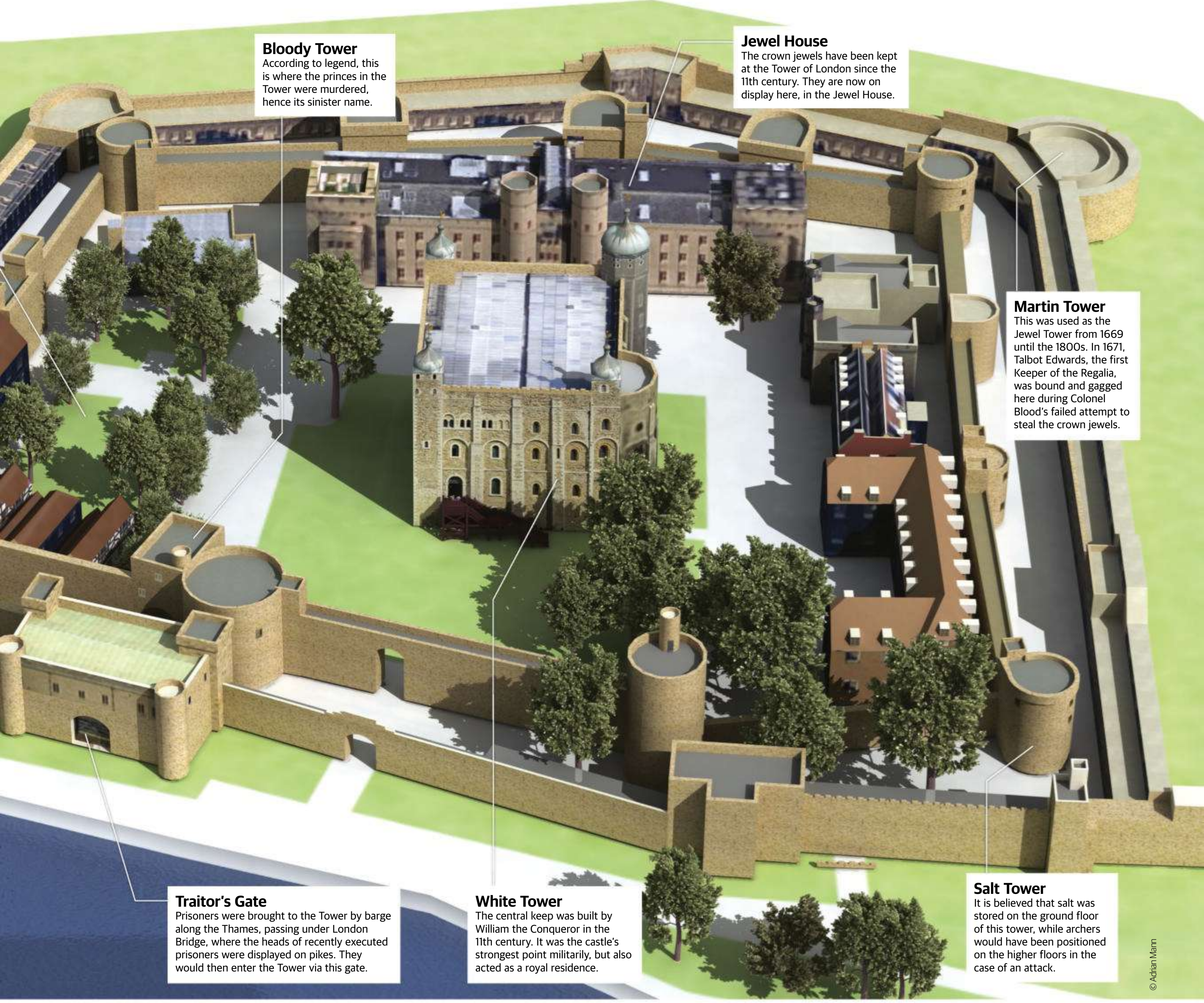


Tower Green
Two of Henry VIII’s wives – Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard – were executed on a scaffold erected here, as well as Lady Jane Grey. Execution inside the tower, away from the gawping crowds, was a privilege reserved for those of high rank or with dangerously strong popular support.

Queen’s House
This half-timbered house was built during the reign of Henry VIII. It is believed the original house was built for Anne Boleyn, who stayed here before her coronation, and also, ironically, before her execution.

Bell Tower
There is a small wooden turret on top of the Bell Tower that contains the Tower’s curfew bell. It was used both as an alarm and to tell prisoners to return to their cells. Elizabeth I was imprisoned here by her sister, Mary I, for assisting a rebellion against her.

Wolsey also clashed with Charles Brandon as well as Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk. The duke delighted in Wolsey’s eventual downfall, while Brandon would go on to replace him as the king’s main confidante. But before Wolsey was cast aside by Henry VIII, he is said to have been responsible for the death of Edward Stafford, Third Duke of Buckingham. The pair had fought because Stafford resented Wolsey’s low-birth, while Wolsey (and Henry VIII) hated that Stafford had been given land, wealth and descent from Thomas of



Bloody Tower
According to legend, this is where the princes in the Tower were murdered, hence its sinister name.

Jewel House
The crown jewels have been kept at the Tower of London since the 11th century. They are now on display here, in the Jewel House.

Martin Tower
This was used as the Jewel Tower from 1669 until the 1800s. In 1671, Talbot Edwards, the first Keeper of the Regalia, was bound and gagged here during Colonel Blood's failed attempt to steal the crown jewels.

Traitor's Gate
Prisoners were brought to the Tower by barge along the Thames, passing under London Bridge, where the heads of recently executed prisoners were displayed on pikes. They would then enter the Tower via this gate.

White Tower
The central keep was built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century. It was the castle's strongest point militarily, but also acted as a royal residence.

Salt Tower
It is believed that salt was stored on the ground floor of this tower, while archers would have been positioned on the higher floors in the case of an attack.

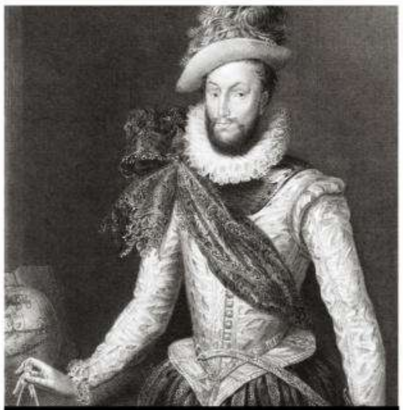
© Adrian Mann

Tower of London

The Tower of London has been an iconic part of England's capital city for close to 1,000 years, built under the commission of the country's conqueror, William Duke of Normandy. The first foundations of the 27 metre (89 feet) high stone fortress known as the White Tower were laid in 1078 and it initially served as a fear-inducing residential palace, its walls an impenetrable 4.5 metres (15 feet) thick. As subsequent kings took to the throne, the Tower of London evolved with extra walls, towers, buildings and a moat also being added.

King Henry VIII used the Tower to store weapons, documents and precious possessions including jewellery. His collection of lions and exotic animals was housed in the Lion Tower and there were extensive lodgings, carefully renovated and modernised, with the Queen's Great Chamber, Great Hall and kitchens being given careful attention. Of greater note, though, were the gruesome goings-on taking place within its walls. The Tower was used to imprison and torture many high-profile victims, particularly from 1534, the year the king was granted Royal Supremacy which declared him the supreme head of the Church of England. Before Henry VIII, only one person had lost their head in the Tower of London, but during his later reign, political opponents would be snatched from the streets – usually on trumped-up charges of treason or heresy – and locked away in the most squalid of conditions. Executions – usually beheadings – became commonplace.

Sir Thomas More was one of the first religious and political prisoners. He had written polemics against Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation and he had even assisted the king in writing *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, which was dedicated to Pope Leo X. But More's refusal to acknowledge the king as head of the Church of England and his snubbing of the coronation of Anne Boleyn in June 1533 upset Henry. Imprisoned for high treason, he was publicly beheaded on Tower Hill. Similar fates met Thomas Cromwell, the king's right-hand man, and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who had argued Catherine of Aragon's case against Henry VIII's desire for a marriage annulment.


A portrait of the cunning courtier Sir Walter Raleigh, whose secret marriage threw him straight into Elizabeth I's bad books

Courtly players

Charles Brandon

As one of Tudor England's most ruthless social climbers and a prominent courtier, Charles Brandon was the first Duke of Suffolk and a loyal ally of King Henry VIII. He married the king's sister, Mary Tudor, around 1514, and in 1529 he helped to overthrow the chief minister, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey.

Walter Raleigh

Privileged explorer Walter Raleigh charmed his way into the good books of Queen Elizabeth I, who knighted him and made him captain of the Queen's Guard in 1587. She locked him up in the Tower of London five years later when she jealously discovered he had secretly married Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of her ladies-in-waiting.

Philip Sidney

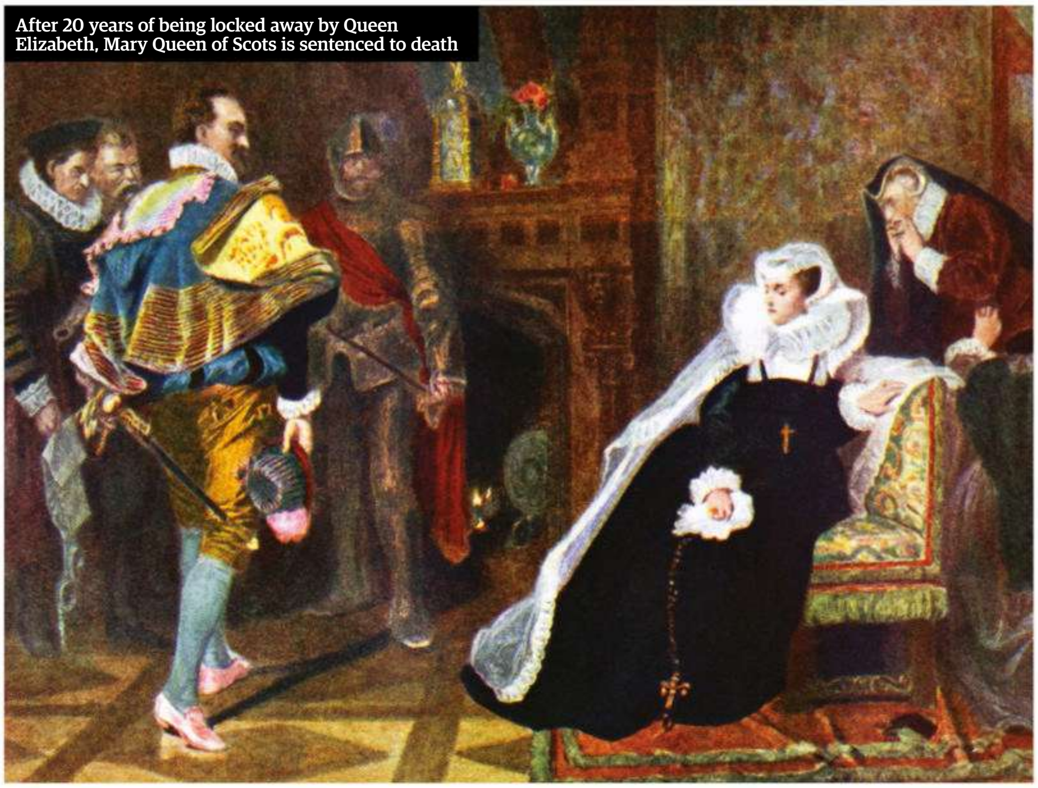
Shakespeare and Marlowe were great Tudor-era playwrights, but poet Philip Sidney was a prominent courtier who was sent as ambassador to the German emperor and the Prince of Orange, and promoted the arts. He nurtured poets such as Edmund Spenser, who inked *The Faerie Queen*, which celebrated Queen Elizabeth I and the Tudor dynasty.

William Compton

When his father died, William Compton became a page to two-year-old Prince Henry, becoming close friends. Compton was later appointed as Henry VIII's Groom of the Stool – serving the king while he used the latrine. Henry' trust earned him promotions and Compton became a wealthy, influential man with numerous crown posts.

Sir Francis Walsingham

Brought into the fold by William Cecil who admired his talent, Walsingham flourished under Elizabeth I's reign. The spymaster's effective intelligence network focused on foreign enemies and those suspected of plotting from within. He discovered the Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I, which led to the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.


After 20 years of being locked away by Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots is sentenced to death

> "The court of Henry VIII had much internal unrest, but the king was far more lavish than his father"

Woodstock, son of Edward III. So when Wolsey received a letter that accused the duke of treason, he was only too happy to pass it to the king. Henry VIII ordered a swift execution.

Thomas Cromwell, a close ally of Wolsey, was also opposed by court factions, his low birth and closeness to the king being deciding factors in his unpopularity. Cromwell had cleverly steered England through the break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries, but they opened up fresh conflict within the court. With some courtiers displeased over the issues regarding Henry's marital life and the shift to Lutheran thinking, there was backstabbing aplenty as Protestant and Catholic factions emerged.

Thomas More campaigned against the Reformation, which brought Protestantism to England and put Henry VIII as head of the country's church, despite the threat of treason and death hanging over him. Howard detested Cromwell and arrested him with glee when, despite becoming a favourite of the king, he made an error by suggesting Anne of Cleves as a suitable queen. During some bloody years, the Boleyns, Poles and Howards were destroyed. It was clear that to displease the king was disastrous. And yet for those in favour, it was a time of plenty.

The court of Henry VIII had much internal unrest, but the king was far more lavish than his father and he did much to undo the years of financial grafting with a rather more carefree outlook. Foreign influence was welcomed and it saw eminent scholars such as the Dutchman Desiderius Erasmus becoming a regular visitor to the court. He was a great thinker who taught at Cambridge and who rallied against the radicalism of some of the most extreme leaders of the Protestant Reformation.

Staying on the right side of the king and the subsequent royals was crucial, though. If nothing else, it guaranteed good food. To be able to feast on delightful, well-prepared meats in lavish, abundant banquets was a real treat, with those in the court filling their stomachs with peacocks, swans, blackbirds, boar, deer and geese. The diets of the courtiers, as well as the king, was poor in vegetables since they were seen as the foodstuffs of the have-nots. But as they carved at their food with knives, scooped with silver spoons and dug in with their hands, they savoured every mouthful. The guests would enjoy the flavours of the meat, enhanced with

> Portraits were very important for Tudor artists, who would manage and run large studios

imported spices and locally grown herbs, while washing it down with wine drunk from carefully crafted glasses. If their expensively tailored clothes were not bursting at the seams after this, they would gobble down rich, attractive desserts made of marchpane, a marzipan consisting of ground almonds and sugar.

At the same time, the courtiers were kept entertained. Leisure time was valued in the court, primarily because Henry VIII loved to frolic rather than work. He enjoyed hunting and sport, and they became common pastimes for the courtiers too. Jousting tournaments were enjoyed on holy days and special occasions, and there was also much time for relaxation with music. The king was a keen musician and composer, but there were many influences and visitors from Europe. The opera, anthem, masque and madrigal emerged during the Tudor period, with Thomas Tallis, Robert Johnson, Orlando Gibbons, John Farmer, John Dowland and William Byrd among the great English composers.

Edward VI's coronation upon Henry VIII's death did not lead to a cultural morass, but it did lead to more jostling for power. The Duke of Somerset was initially the young king's Protector, but the Duke of Northumberland persuaded the king to remove him from power; he then took over the role. But a true paranoid period emerged when Mary I was crowned after deposing the Protestant proclaimed queen, Lady Jane Grey, who was executed. Mary I had brought Catholicism back to England, burning Protestants and allying herself with Spain. It split the country, led to underground movements and created martyrs such as Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. He had fled Cambridge for Essex due to a plague, helped Henry VIII divorce Catherine of Aragon, and become the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury - but that religious siding put him at odds with Mary I and he was burnt to death. Mary's entire reign was marked by bloodshed and the Tower of London became a busy place. Indeed, torture was routine for courtiers who fell out of favour, with all manner of devilish devices invented for maximum pain and discomfort. A trip to the Tower of London was no treat.

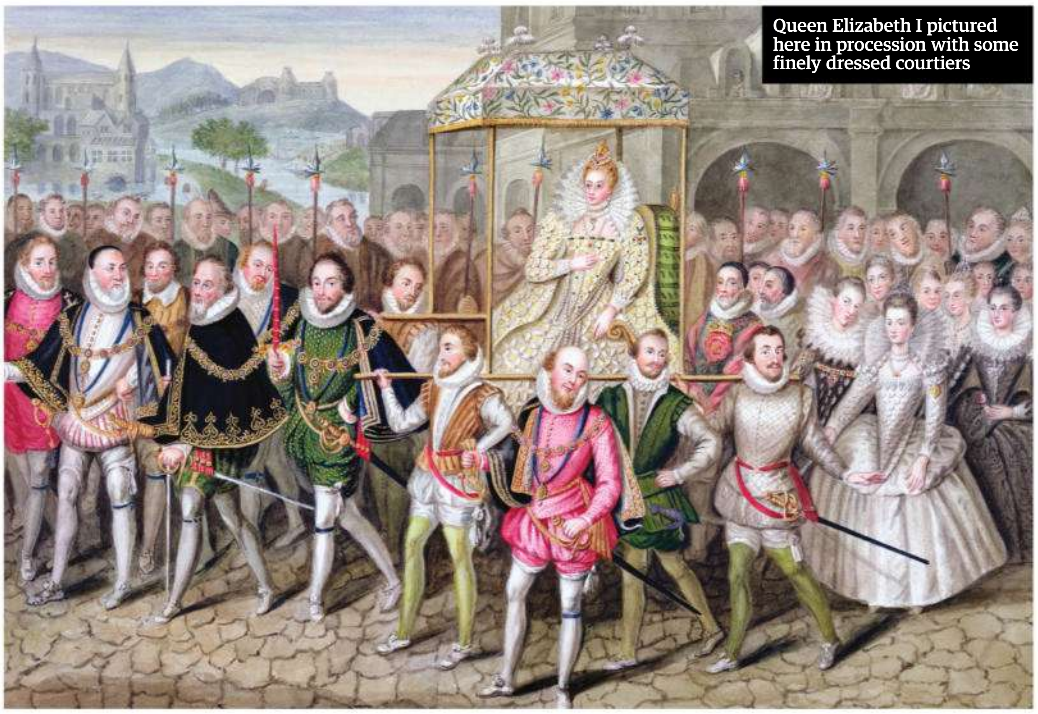
Elizabeth I's court was no less troublesome. She spent much of her time in Whitehall, although she also had the pick of many other royal palaces, from St James to Windsor Castle to Greenwich and Richmond. Courtiers would socialise and be entertained in the queen's presence in the Presence Chamber, where music, plays, a masque or ball would be staged. Bear- and dog-baiting attracted crowds of courtiers. The men in Elizabethan times would be impeccably dressed, padded round trunks replacing the tight-fitting hose of earlier court life. The women had wire within their dresses to give them a look of narrow waists. The tops would generally reveal more than a hint of bosom.

The queen expected great respect, love and loyalty from the courtiers and she wanted them to be flirtatious while understanding well that she would never reciprocate (although there are suggestions that she did have affairs with some courtiers, including Christopher Hatton who became Lord Chancellor of England and Robert Dudley, a political advisor). The courtiers playing music and declarations of devotion helped to focus the court's attention on her. The men were more than happy to play around, though, since it offered them to chance of special favours that would hand them high positions and wealth.

Under Elizabeth I, England flourished and the period became known as the 'golden age'. To some extent, her courtiers were like an extended family, especially since she never married herself. She would hand gifts to courtiers and servants with gold-plated items reserved for the higher ranks. She also invited key explorers into her court, including Francis Drake, who raided Spanish ships with the queen's support. He plundered gold for her and built English riches. Walter Raleigh emerged as one of her favourites and there was a possibility of some love interest until he secretly married; this enraged her, igniting her jealousy. Still, Raleigh's efforts helped to pave the way for the British Empire which stretched across the globe, and at least he survived the Tudor era.

Throughout the early parts of Elizabeth's reign, though, Mary, Queen of Scots was ever-present, although she had been locked away for some 20 years. The Catholics threatened to remove Elizabeth from power and install Mary instead. Despite being the queen's cousin, Mary was beheaded in 1587 and while Elizabeth agreed to the execution, she had tried to backtrack. Her secretary William Davison was blamed for delivering the warrant despite the change of heart, and he was fined and imprisoned in the Tower of London as a result.

Elizabeth was the last of the Tudor dynasty; she was replaced by James I. The son of Mary, Queen of Scots, James was a member of the Stuart family. In 1603, after 118 years, an exciting and eventful chapter in British royal history had come to an end.


Queen Elizabeth I pictured here in procession with some finely dressed courtiers

What do we mean by 'Tudor court'?

The kings and queens of the Tudor period lived in many different places, from the Palace of Westminster to Baynard's Castle. Surrounding the monarch were hundreds of noblemen and servants who looked after them, both personally and supportively. Each was selected for their talents and collective ability to highlight the rich, powerful and important nature of the royals.

Already wealthy in their own right, courtiers would enjoy the best clothes, the tastiest, meatiest food, and the finest music, poetry and art. Their lives were a world apart from the poor living outside of the court, but there was much pressure to remain within: to displease a monarch risked being banished or executed. This naturally led to feuding as courtiers tried to get as close to the leading man or woman as possible to gain the greatest favours.

There was an important physical court, too: Hampton Court. Acquired by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in 1514, what had once been a large house became a palace fit for a king, a true display of wealth and power. Wolsey used it to host diplomatic visits and to entertain, reinforcing his position as the second most powerful man in the realm.

But when Wolsey lost his power, he also lost his home. Seized by Henry VIII in 1528, Hampton Court became the king's favourite royal residence. Equipped with huge kitchens, a chapel and Great Hall for dining, its gardens were magnificently landscaped and there was good sanitation.

Hampton Court continued to be popular following Henry's death, taken on by subsequent heirs. It provided a beautiful country retreat and was perfect for impressing foreign delegations.

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Everyday life in Tudor England

The Tudor period was a time of incredible growth and economic expansion for England, with every citizen contributing to its success

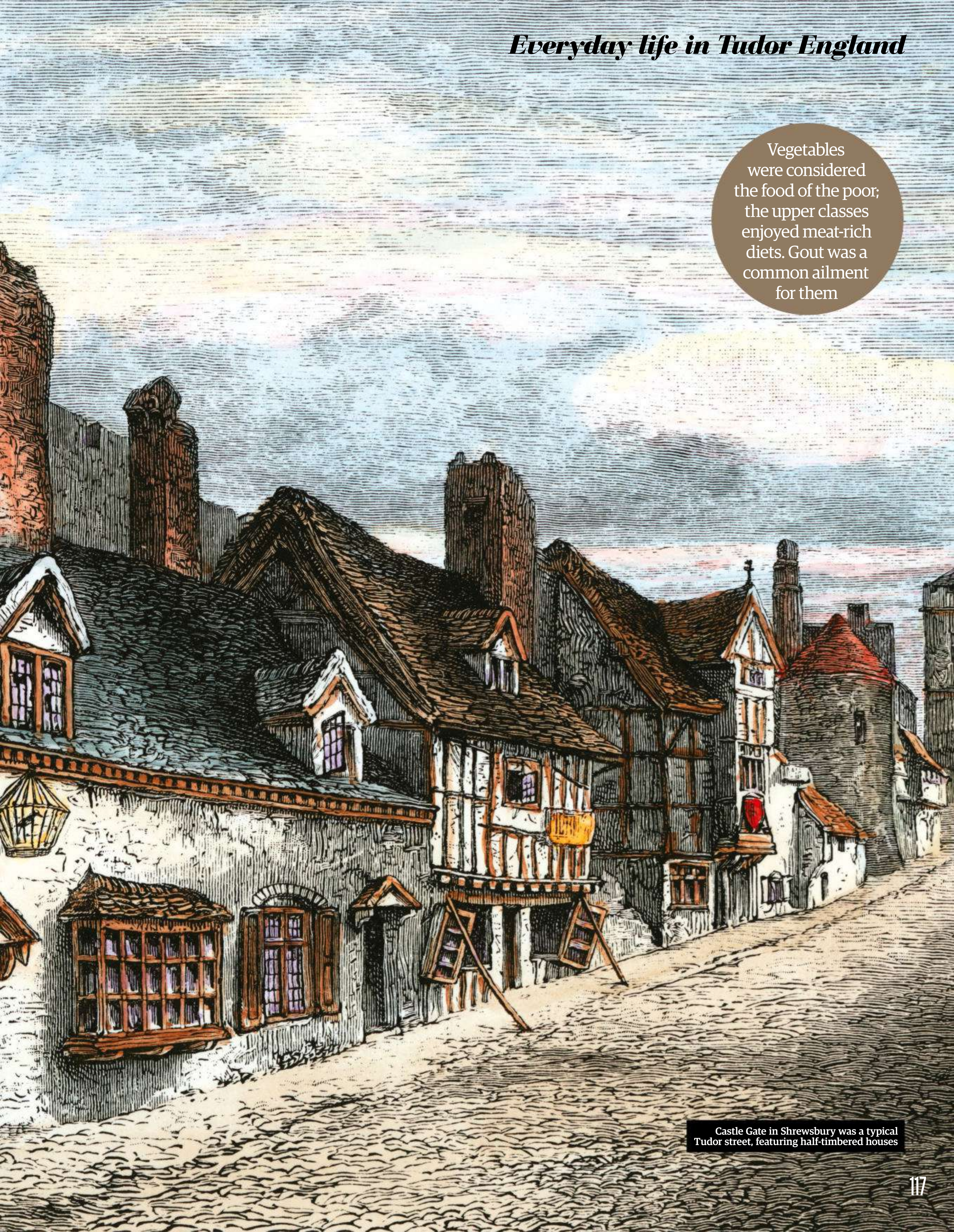
The popular image of Tudor life paints a picture of kings, queens and nobles engaged in courtly intrigue and living lives of magnificent excess, but the truth is that urban existence was very much a minority way of life, with 90 per cent of the population living and working in rural areas. For every ornately dressed noble, dashing explorer and majestic monarch, there were countless commoners providing the food for their tables, the textiles for their clothes and the trade goods on which their fortunes, dynasties and empires were built. Despite the huge contrasts in their everyday lifestyles, the rural and urban communities were entirely dependent on each other for their continued existence.

The poorest rural folk lived in one- or two-room huts, dirt-floored and built from cob (a mixture of mud, straw and lime), with a shuttered or curtained window to allow some light to enter. For the wealthier peasant, homes took the form of 'crook' houses, built around simple timber frames with wattle and daub walls between the timber sections. Furnishings were minimal and functional: a table and stool, an open fire in the centre of the main living area with a hole in the roof allowing smoke to escape, beds that consisted of little more than straw-filled mattresses and a woollen blanket. In addition, the living space might well be shared with any animals a family kept, bringing extra warmth to the house, but also less welcome associated smells.

Monasteries held a prominent role in the early-Tudor period; much of the land was owned by local monasteries and priories, and was leased to the peasants to live on and work. Schooling was available to those who could afford to attend priory classrooms, and with many of the country's waterways owned by the church, use of a watermill to grind grain and 'full' (or cleanse) cloth meant paying the local monastery for the service. The church's coffers benefited at every level of society and very little of a peasant's daily life was not impacted in some way by the local monastery. When Henry VIII broke with the Catholic church in 1536 and dissolved many of the monasteries, the land and resources they owned were simply redistributed to nobles who took over the local administration, reaping the benefits previously enjoyed by the church. While the funds generated moved from the church to the crown, from the peasant's point of view little had changed: land still had to be rented and dues still had to be paid.

> Many peasants received a pig as part of their annual wage; many rural households kept at least one to rear for meat

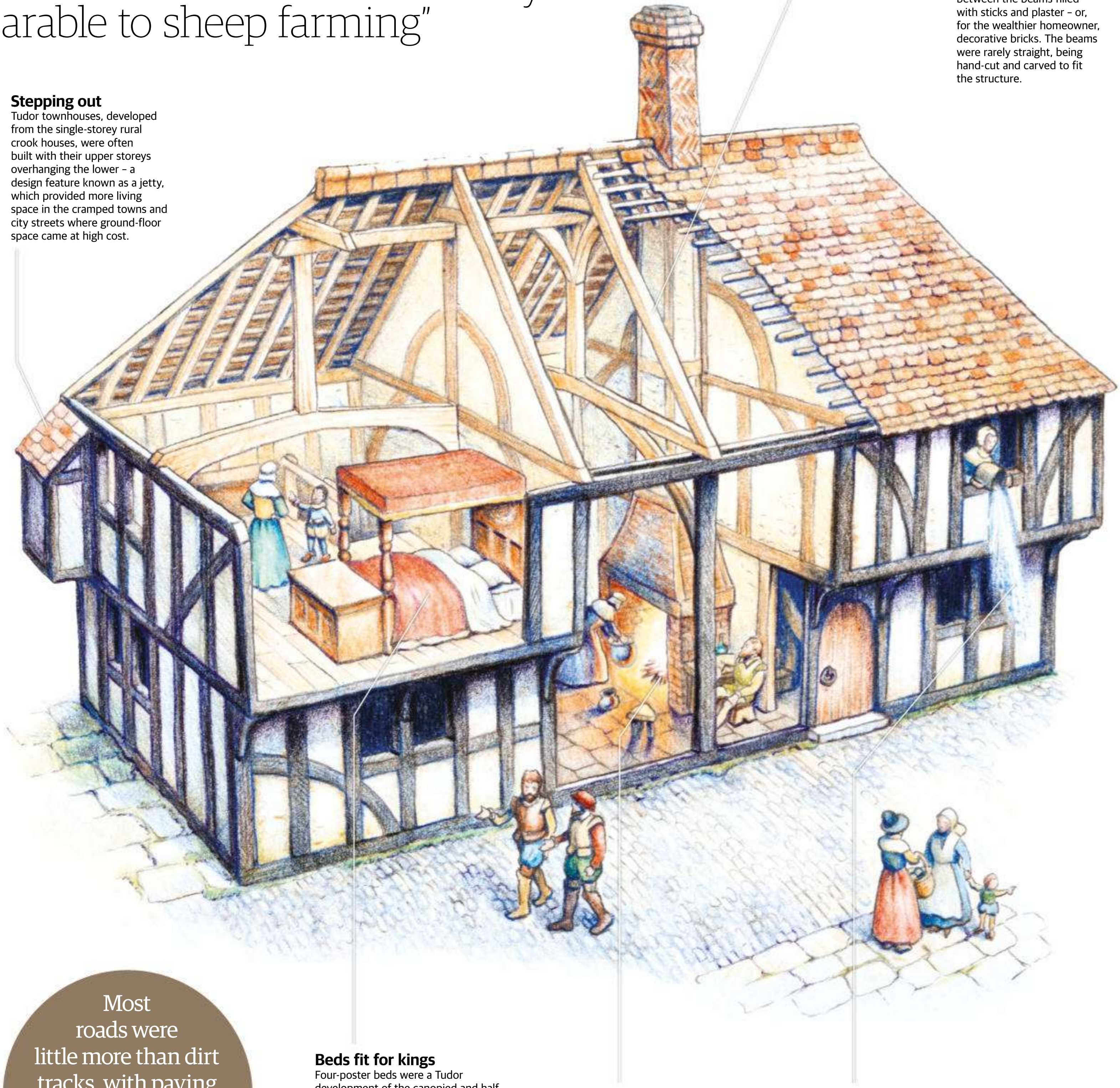
The backbone of the Tudor economy was agriculture. Farmable land was valuable, and it wasn't unheard of for landowners to increase the rent charged on peasants' homes to the point



Vegetables were considered the food of the poor; the upper classes enjoyed meat-rich diets. Gout was a common ailment for them

Castle Gate in Shrewsbury was a typical Tudor street, featuring half-timbered houses

"Growth of the cloth trade during the early 1500s prompted many farmers to switch from mainly arable to sheep farming"



A solid foundation
Tudor town houses were often built as a skeleton of timber beams, which bore the load of the structure and allowed second and third stories to be added, with the areas between the beams filled with sticks and plaster – or, for the wealthier homeowner, decorative bricks. The beams were rarely straight, being hand-cut and carved to fit the structure.

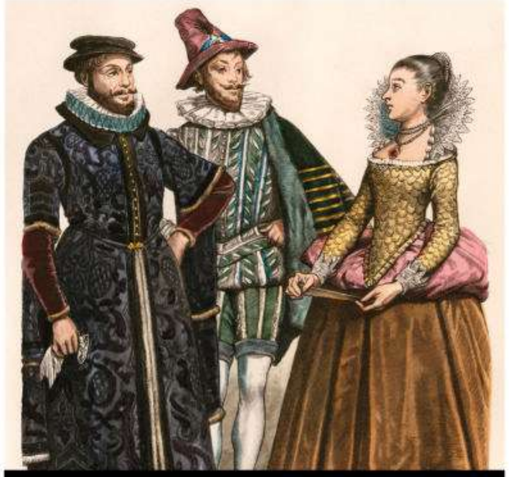
Stepping out
Tudor townhouses, developed from the single-storey rural crook houses, were often built with their upper storeys overhanging the lower – a design feature known as a jetty, which provided more living space in the cramped towns and city streets where ground-floor space came at high cost.

Beds fit for kings
Four-poster beds were a Tudor development of the canopied and half-tester beds of earlier periods, and were often a status symbol, lavishly decorated with ornate carvings of coats of arms and elaborately embroidered bedding. Their canopies prevented anything unpleasant from falling onto the sleepers below, a valuable feature at a time when many houses still had thatched roofs that were home to countless insects and vermin.

Fire without smoke
The increasing use of coal as fuel in Tudor times, and the need to expel the greater quantities of thick smoke it produced compared to wood from the living space, led to enclosed fireplaces and brick-built chimneys becoming common in homes.

An unsanitary practice
With no internal plumbing or sanitation, household water for washing and cooking would be drawn from a nearby well. Waste water, spoiled food and human waste would be thrown out of windows into the street, to be cleared away by the night soil collectors and used for fertiliser or buried in designated areas.

Most roads were little more than dirt tracks, with paving mostly restricted to areas of high traffic, such as around city gates



An English merchant, noble and lady-in-waiting wearing the typically ostentatious fashions of the wealthy

where the inhabitants could not afford to pay, forcing them to move away and releasing their land back to the landowner who could then turn it into more farmland. With every penny counting, wastage was kept to a minimum, with every possible source of supplementary income exploited. Livestock were bred to serve multiple purposes, with sheep providing milk, cheese and meat as well as wool; food scraps fed pigs; animal hide was turned into leather and vellum; and horn was used in the production of hornbooks for schools. Even animal fat could be boiled down and soaked into reeds to create rushlights, providing an economical, if foul-smelling, source of light on dark evenings.

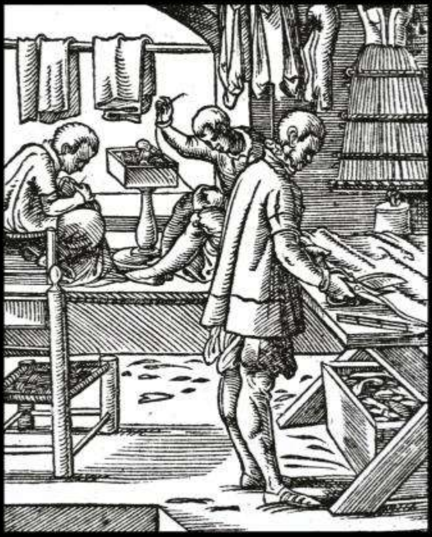
Growth of the cloth trade during the early 1500s prompted many farmers to switch from mainly arable to sheep farming, though where possible farmers would maintain mixed farms, also growing barley, peas, grass for animal feed, and raising pigs and poultry. The principal source of income for many farmers, though, was wool, and the higher-quality pasture of English fields meant that English wool grew finer and longer than much of the continental stock, increasing its value to cloth-makers. Woollen textiles grew in demand, replacing the raw fleeces that had previously been England's main wool export, and generating as much as £1.5 million per year in export trade. Estimates place the population of sheep in the country at the time as two to three times that of the people, and the processes involved in producing textiles – including shearing, spinning, weaving and dyeing – provided reliable, year-round employment for many living in rural communities.

Profitable sheep-rearing required land, and the growing practice of 'enclosure' saw landowners begin to erect fences and hedges around previously open fields and even common land, which had formerly been freely available for the use of peasants to forage and graze pigs, geese and other livestock. Restricting the use of the common land was understandably unpopular, leading to civil unrest and, in some cases, outright rebellion by the peasants against the landowners. In Norfolk in 1549, Robert Kett, himself a landowner who

Tudor professions

Life was different in rural and urban areas, but what were the career prospects like?

Town



Woad dyer

The primary source of blue dye for textiles was a plant brought to Britain by the Celts: woad. A particularly unpleasant job, extracting the dye required fermentation in vats of urine, producing noxious fumes that forced woad dyers to live and work on the edges of towns.

Gong scourer

Gong scourers were employed to remove the human waste from a town's privies, public latrines and cesspits. Working only at night, and often in cramped, highly noxious environments, the scourers would remove the accumulated waste and take it to designated dumps, or to be spread as fertiliser on fields.

Executioner

In an era where treason and religious dissent were rife and carried the most serious of penalties, the role of the executioner was an unfortunate necessity. The job was often well paid, but also brought with it a degree of fear, distrust and social exclusion.

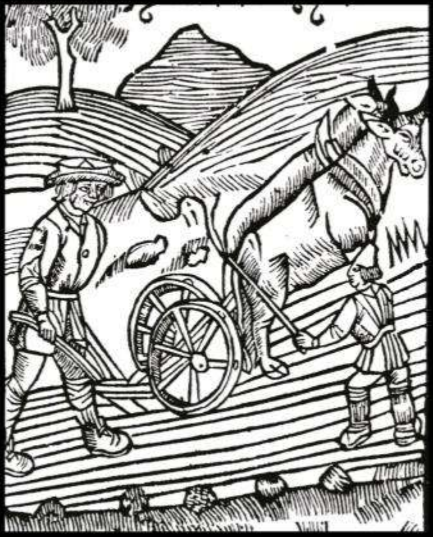
Merchant

With goods flowing through the towns, opportunities to profit from importing and exporting were frequent, and the rewards for establishing successful trade partnerships were immense. While wool was the most prominent export, money was also to be made from importing spices, coffee, tea and exotic foods.

Mayor

As the elected governmental representative of a town, the mayor's responsibilities were wide-ranging, from performing civic and social duties and overseeing the town's administration, to enforcing parliamentary statutes and acting as local magistrate to ensure that order was maintained within the areas of their jurisdiction.

Country



Leech collector

The popular use of leeches in medicine meant money could be made by anyone able to procure leeches for the medical professions. Leech collectors, often women, waded into marshes and ponds, using their bare skin to lure the leeches, putting themselves at significant risk of injury.

Farmer

The importance of the humble farmer to Tudor society can not be overstated – the export of cloth relied on the rearing of sheep, and without the constant supplies of grain, meat and vegetables they provided, towns and cities would have had to rely on more expensive imported food supplies to feed the masses.

Bailiff

Bailiffs were employed by the church, county sheriffs and private landowners, to collect taxes and fines, assemble trial juries and execute official orders such as foreclosure and eviction notices. Many would supplement their official wage by accepting bribes and gifts.

Fuller

Fullers took spun woollen material and, by soaking in stale urine and pounding for hours beneath heavy stones at the local mill, turned them into softer, warmer and much more desirable woollen cloth. The work was dirty, noisy and unpleasant, but the quality and value of the fulled cloth was greatly increased.

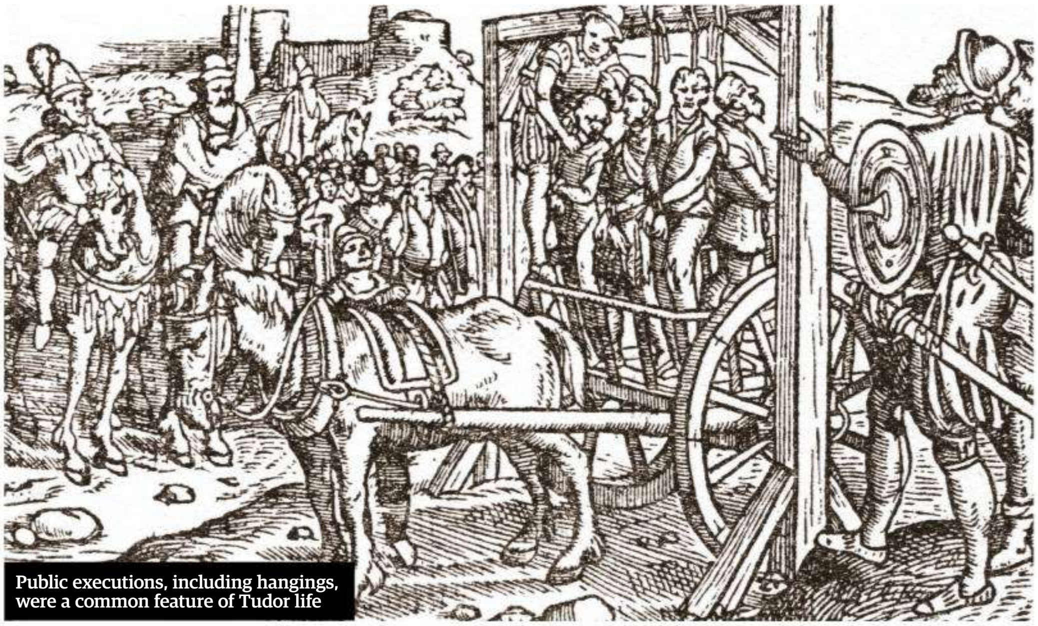
Noble landowner

In many ways enjoying a privilege more than a profession, the noble landowner was nevertheless a prominent figure in rural life. With their income drawn from the rent and taxes collected from the local peasants, the landowners were able to live very comfortably, enjoying pastimes such as hunting, tennis and lawn bowls.

had previously enclosed land, realised that the practice was causing more harm than good and offered to help the protesting peasants air their grievances against the other landowners. Kett felt the best way to have the peasant's opinions heard was to march to Norwich, and with local villagers flocking to join him en route, his peasant army stood at 16,000 strong by the time he reached the city gates. Initially denied entry to the city, Kett and his army attacked, taking the second largest city in the country by force of arms. Kett formed a council made up of representatives of the local villagers and sent their demands to Edward VI. Edward's response was brutal – an army was sent to Norwich, butchering the rebels in the fields outside the city, and Kett was captured and later executed. Parliament, seeing the incendiary effect that enclosure was having on the populace, passed laws preventing recently enclosed common land from being used for pasture, and imposed poll taxes on sheep in the hope of settling the situation. However, with responsibility for actually enforcing these laws falling to the landowners who had caused the problem in the first place, they were often ignored.

If the villages and hamlets of rural England were the centres of production, the market towns and cities were the centres of commerce. With produce to sell, farmers needed venues at which to trade. While small, local markets, often held on monastery land, were available, the main economic hubs were the country's market towns. Farmers brought their produce to the market towns where they could be traded with craftsmen, merchants and local businesses, to be converted into other goods or transported on to the cities and ports, and from there to Europe. As domestic production grew, the frequency of market days increased, with many becoming weekly occurrences; the increased popularity of

> Bread and ale were the cornerstones of Tudor meals, with the average peasant consuming up to eight pints of ale each day


Public executions, including hangings, were a common feature of Tudor life

Tudor farm: Dawn to dusk

03:00 – 05:00
An early start

Restricted by the amount of daylight, work on the farm began before dawn with feeding and watering the livestock, and lighting the day's fire in the farmhouse. Breakfast for the farmer was often pottage, a thick vegetable stew.

06:00
Testing the boundaries

Branches from hazel coppices were woven together to form wattle fences, used as enclosures for livestock. Proper fencing was essential to prevent wild animals from attacking livestock.

07:00
Tending the flock

The farmer's most valuable asset, his sheep, required constant care and attention. The flock had to be fed, milked daily, moved from pasture to pasture and, when the time came, shorn of their wool or butchered for meat.

11:00
Feeding the work force

The day's main meal was eaten before noon and consisted principally of bread, vegetables and ale. With well water unsuitable for human consumption, ale was much safer to drink, as its alcohol content killed off most bacteria.

12:00
Preparing the harvest

As well as keeping livestock, farmers also grew arable crops like barley and peas. Cattle and oxen, rather than horses, were traditionally used to plough and harrow the fields ready for sowing, a long and labour-intensive process.

20:00
Labour's end

According to the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers, labourers worked until 7 or 8pm in spring and summer, making the most of the daylight. Workers would retire to their homes for the night before starting again at sunrise.

Social reform timeline

Advances in industry and Tudor life would have been impossible without these landmark changes to legislation

1485

1601

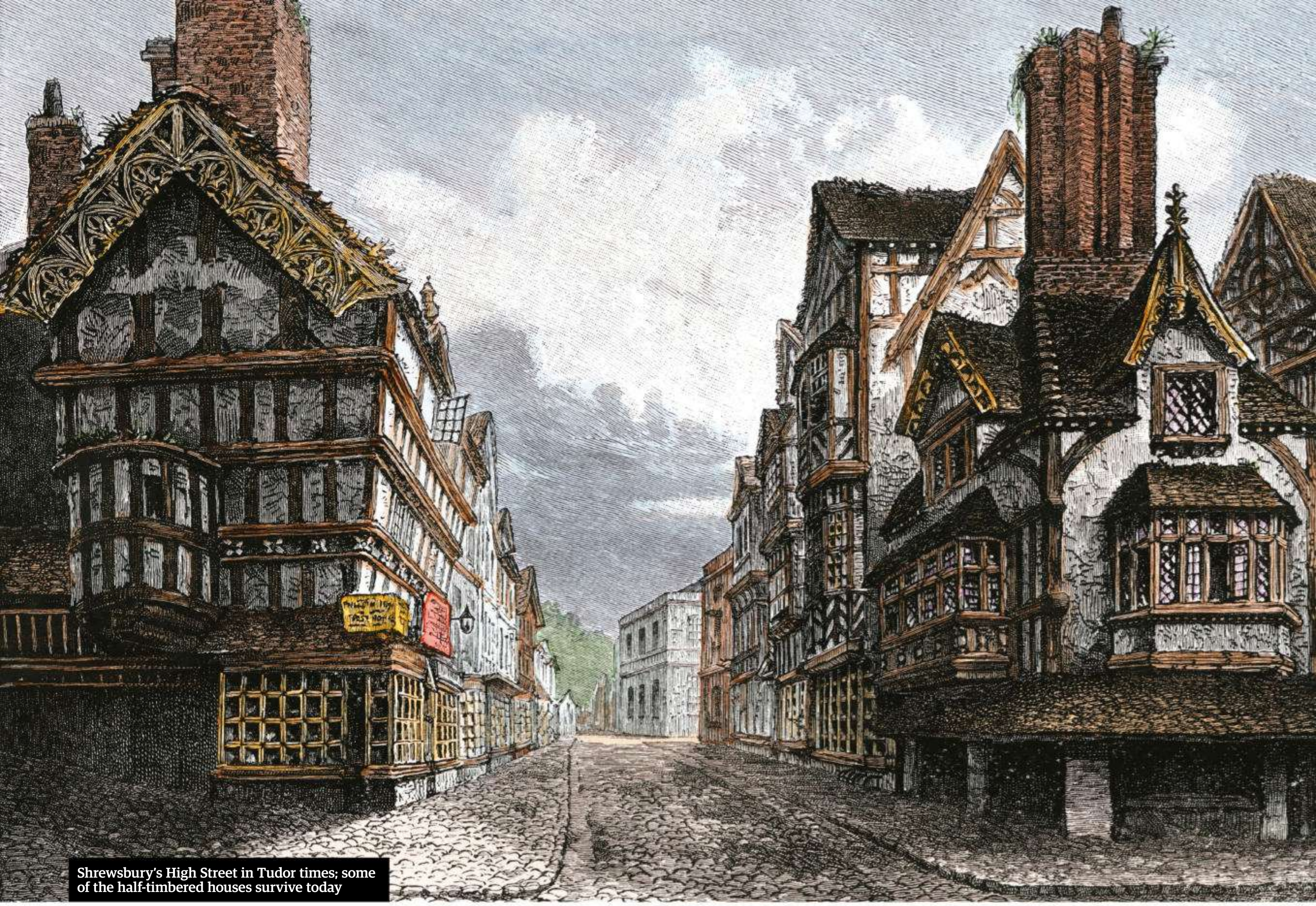
The English Poor Laws
The Poor Laws evolved constantly throughout the 16th century, often focusing on punishments for vagrancy and how beggars might be put to work, but also leading to more positive changes such as statutes that enforced the provision of relief for the poor and providing work for those that could not find employment.
1495-1601

Enclosure
With the rise in demand for wool, landowners looked for ways to increase their profits from the booming cloth trade and began to enclose fields and areas of common land to increase available grazing land. In many cases this led to civil unrest and open rebellion from the peasants.
1489

The English Reformation
Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries had a profound effect on the way the country operated – the lands and schools that had belonged to the monasteries were seized and turned over to noble families to administer, with their associated incomes going to the crown's coffers rather than the Catholic church.
1536-1541

Education for the masses
Edward VI's policy of founding grammar schools that allowed children to study without paying traditional attendance fees provided a huge boost to the nation's levels of education, with learning now freely available to all children and no longer just the preserve of the wealthy and privileged.
1547-1553

Revival of the Heresy Acts
Mary I's reign proved a dangerous period for Protestants, as her desire to see the Catholic church reinstated as England's foremost religion prompted the return of the Heresy Acts and the subsequent persecution and execution of many of England's Protestants, with many so-called heretics burnt at the stake.
1553-1558


Shrewsbury's High Street in Tudor times; some of the half-timbered houses survive today

Shrewsbury's markets led to local complaints at the wear and tear on nearby roads caused by the ever-increasing number of visiting market-goers. Town residents made their livings by opening shops that sold goods from the ground-floor windows of their houses, while inns provided bed and board to those that had travelled from afar, as well as a place to relax, socialise and conduct business meetings. Entertainment became important, with the popularity of plays held in the street leading to the construction of the first purpose-built theatre in London in 1576 and heralding an era where attending performances would become a popular pastime for rich and poor alike.

The rural crook house evolved further in the towns and cities into the iconic 'half-timbered' Tudor houses. The box frames allowed construction of two or three storeys, vastly increasing the available living space for the families living within – a desirable feature in the cramped urban streets where ground-floor space was limited and costly. Better-quality furnishings were more apparent, with four-poster beds becoming as much a status symbol as a comfortable place to sleep. Thatching was replaced by clay or stone tiles, which in cities lowered the risk of widespread damage in the event of fire; glass windows, though expensive, became more popular as the period wore on. The towns and cities were busy, noisy, thriving places, drawing people from rural communities and abroad with the promise of an affluent lifestyle, though the increased population also brought with it the classic problems of overcrowding; disease, squalor, poor sanitation and increased crime.

While the market towns represented a large step in the country's economic progress, its apex lay with the country's major ports. In the early 1500s, almost half of England's wool, and most of its cloth, passed through London's docks, shipped to the Low Countries where an abundance of cloth-finishing industries would refine it before it returned to England to be sold for a higher price. The relocation of the navy from Portsmouth to the capital saw an explosion in shipbuilding, along with the associated suppliers and trades. Larger ships were built and trade beyond the traditional trading partners of Western Europe became possible, increasing the flow of money into the city. By 1603, England's international reputation as a major cultural, industrial and economic power was well established; a reputation only made possible by the combined efforts of its people.

Tudor education

Though affected by the volatile religious climate, the Tudor era saw huge steps taken in the provision of education to the common citizen

Access to education, although intended more for boys than girls, was much more available in Tudor times than it had been during previous periods. Villages and small towns often had a local parish school where children could be taught to read and write (using hornbooks that featured the alphabet or the Lord's Prayer), while the sons of the middle and upper classes were able to attend, for a fee, 'Petty' (for children aged four to seven) and grammar schools, and perhaps go on to attend university at Oxford or Cambridge. Schools opened six days a week, often from 7am until 5pm, and taught a range of subjects including Latin, Greek, religious doctrine and arithmetic.

The daughters of middle and upper class families usually received private tuition, while the majority of lower-class girls had a more practical education at home, teaching them skills that would aid them in running a household once they married. Any scholarly education they received would likely have been passed on to them by their parents or male siblings.

Education suffered during Henry VIII's closure of the monasteries and the schools that were often attached to them, but realising the value of an educated populace, Henry refounded many of the closed schools as 'King's Schools'. Accessible education received another boost during Edward VI's reign with the founding of free grammar schools, raising the standard of learning available to those who had previously found the fees required to send their sons to school too prohibitive.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

English, 1564-1616

Brief Bio

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon to glove maker John Shakespeare and landowner's daughter Mary Arden, William Shakespeare had three children with his wife Anne Hathaway. He moved to London in the late 1580s to pursue an acting career, becoming a prominent and prolific playwright and poet, producing an average of two plays a year until 1611 before retiring to Stratford.

Shakespeare: Plays and politics

Going to the theatre was something all classes enjoyed, but did Shakespeare hide codes and meanings in his work to subvert the establishment during a time of religious turmoil?

Two guards grabbed him tightly and dragged him down a stone corridor, his shackled legs meaning he was unable to keep up the frantic pace they had set. He was determined to show no sign of weakness and tried to concentrate on the senses around him, such as the rats scurrying by his feet, the insects crawling on the walls and the warmth on his face from the burning torches that illuminated the short path.

How had things come to this? He was Robert Southwell, born into a good family and a man who devoted his life to God, being ordained a priest in 1584 in Rome. But what had been one of the best years of his life had also turned into one of the most bitter when later the same year, the 'Jesuits, etc Act' had ordered all Roman Catholic priests to leave England. They were given 40 days' grace to do so and many of his friends had hurriedly scrambled their belongings together and fled the island nation for friendlier shores. These were difficult times to be a Catholic in England.

Pain ripped through his body as the guards swung him around a corner and flung open a new cell door for him. Looking at the horrible conditions his mind raced back. Damn that Henry VIII, he thought. Damn him and his desire for a male heir and his lust for Anne Boleyn that had seen him turn his back on the Catholic faith he had been brought up in. And damn that German monk Martin Luther whose actions had led the Protestant Reformation that had swept through Europe and ultimately been adopted throughout England.

Southwell was levered inside the cramped, dank space. He recognised it from the descriptions of others whose fate had brought them here; it was Limbo, the most feared cell within Newgate Prison, inside a gate in the Roman London Wall. The door closed and the guards walked away. His heart beating wildly with fear, he reflected on his decision to leave Rome in 1586 to travel back to England to work as a Jesuit missionary, staying with numerous Catholic families, thus becoming a wanted man.

Eventually, the door swung open and he was dragged out of his cramped cell. He could barely stand as he was taken to trial, hauled before Lord Chief Justice John Popham and indicted as a traitor. He defiantly laid out his position, admitted to being a priest and his sentence was passed. He was, Popham said, to be hanged, drawn and quartered. After being beaten on the journey through London's streets he

"Queen Elizabeth's religious compromise wasn't without its share of pain"

was forced to stand. His head was placed in a noose and he was briefly hanged. Cut down while still alive, his bowels were removed before his beating heart was dragged from his body and he was cut into four pieces. His severed head was held aloft. This was England in the late-16th century – Queen Elizabeth's religious compromise wasn't without its share of pain and suffering.

This was the world William Shakespeare lived in as he wrote his great works. He had moved to London from Stratford-upon-Avon in 1587, leaving behind his young family to pursue a career as an actor and a playwright with the troupe Lord Strange's Men. He had married Anne Hathaway in 1582, when he was 18 and she was 26, and together they had three children, Susanna, Hamnet and Judith. But the lure of the stage had been too strong to ignore. It had not taken Shakespeare long to make a name for himself. His first play, *Henry VI, Part 1*, written in 1591, made its debut a year later. It was successful enough to make fellow playwrights jealous. One of them was Robert Greene, arguably the first professional author in England. Unlike Shakespeare, he was university educated and urged his friends not to give Shakespeare any work, calling him an 'upstart crow.' Shakespeare was unmoved by such words. It would be, academics conferred later, a sign he was making his mark.

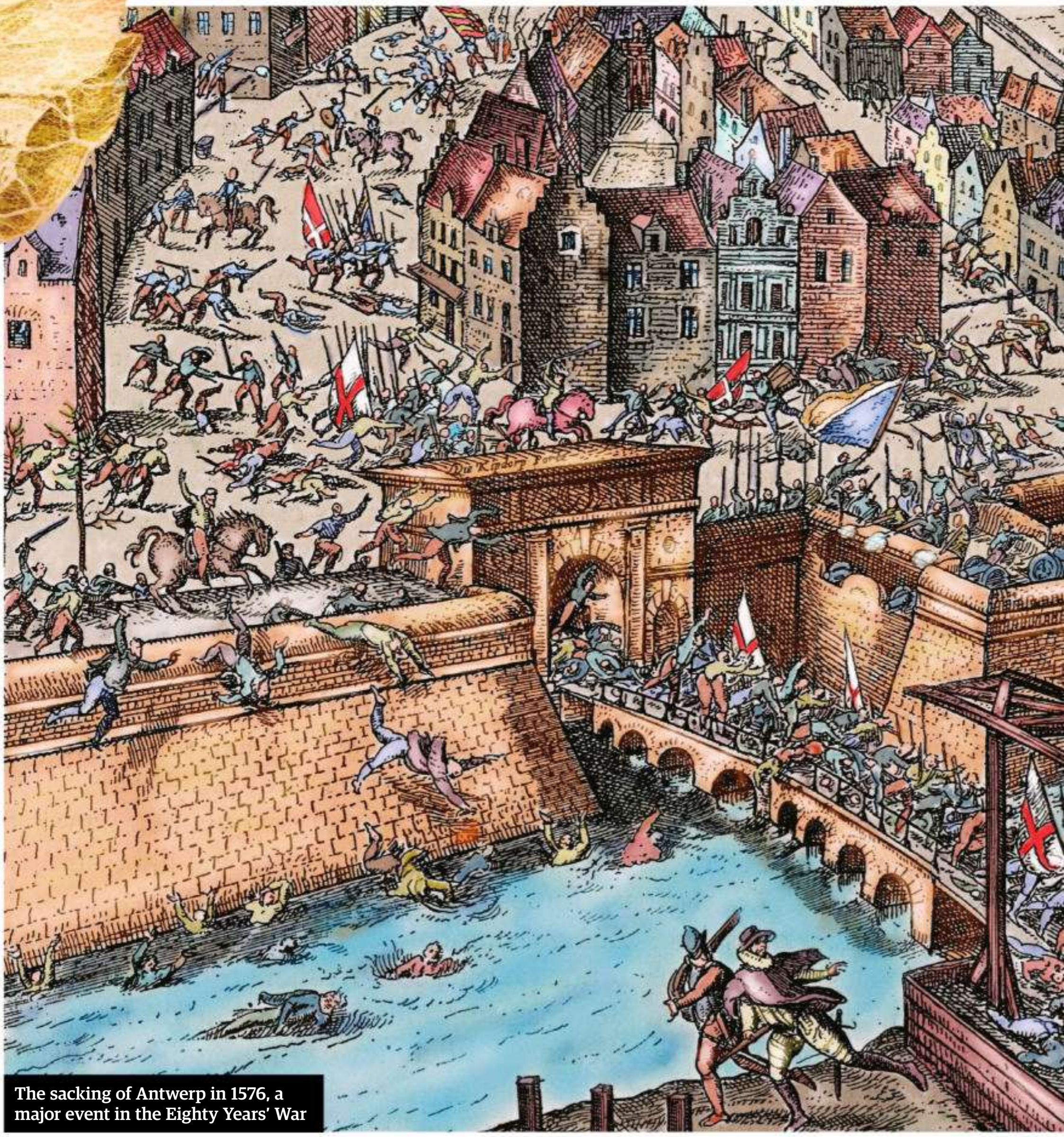
By 1594, he had written more plays and seen both *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrese* published. He dedicated them to his patron Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. He liked the Earl. Southampton was from a long Catholic dynasty and he appreciated poetry and theatre. When the theatres re-opened in 1594 following an outbreak of bubonic plague, he was keen to invite the Earl along. After all, Shakespeare's new troupe, Lord Chamberlain's Men, was becoming popular, with

Religious compromise?

With the untimely death of King Edward VI in 1553, struck with fever and cough that gradually worsened, Mary I ascended to the throne and set about calling a halt to the Reformation. She swung England firmly back towards Catholicism, causing reformers to run scared and flee. Among those displaced was civil servant William Cecil, his relief of a lucky escape palpable as he heard of the 273 Protestants burnt to death under Mary's reign. Terror had been brought on the Protestants but Cecil had the ear of Elizabeth, who he had known for years. She had embraced the Church of England, so much that she had been imprisoned for two months in the Tower of London by her half-sister Mary, who feared she was part of a plot to depose her.

When Mary died in 1558, Cecil wanted to return to a Protestant England. Queen Elizabeth succeeded the throne since Mary had born no child and Cecil became her advisor. Within the year, a uniform state religion had returned. Elizabeth was confirmed as Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

The Act of Uniformity in 1558 set the order of prayer in the *English Book of Common Prayer*. Crucifixes and candlesticks were to be allowed, although new bishops protested. But Protestants who had fled returned and wanted their religion to be supreme. Cecil ensured Catholics would be excluded from public life although he allowed them to worship as long as they did not threaten the queen and did so discreetly. Catholics who rose would be dealt with in the most serious of ways.

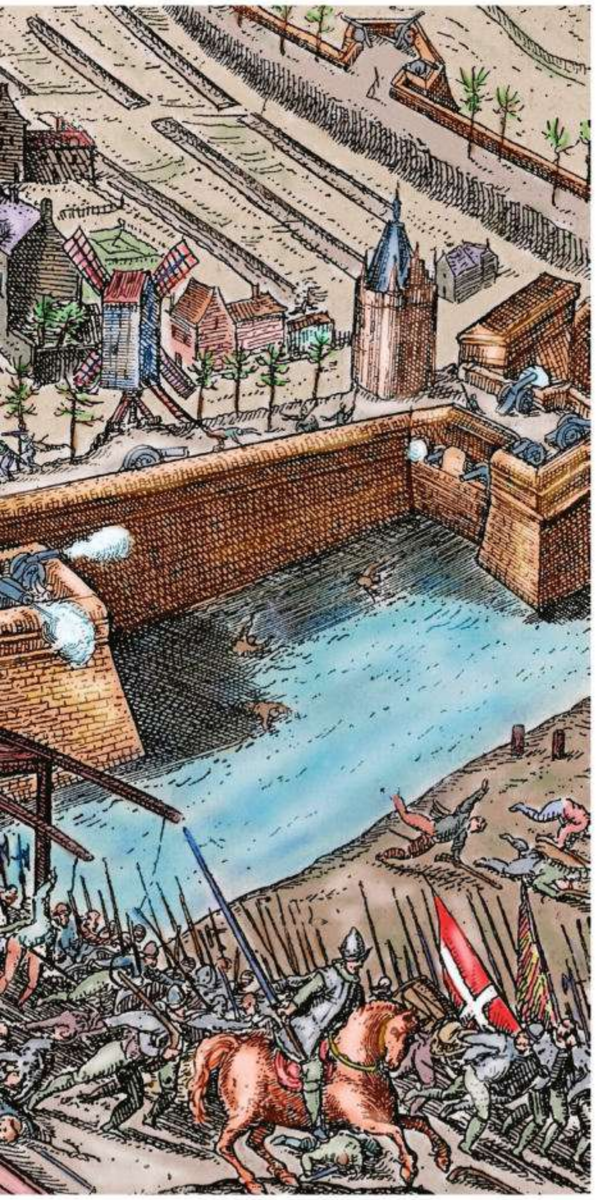


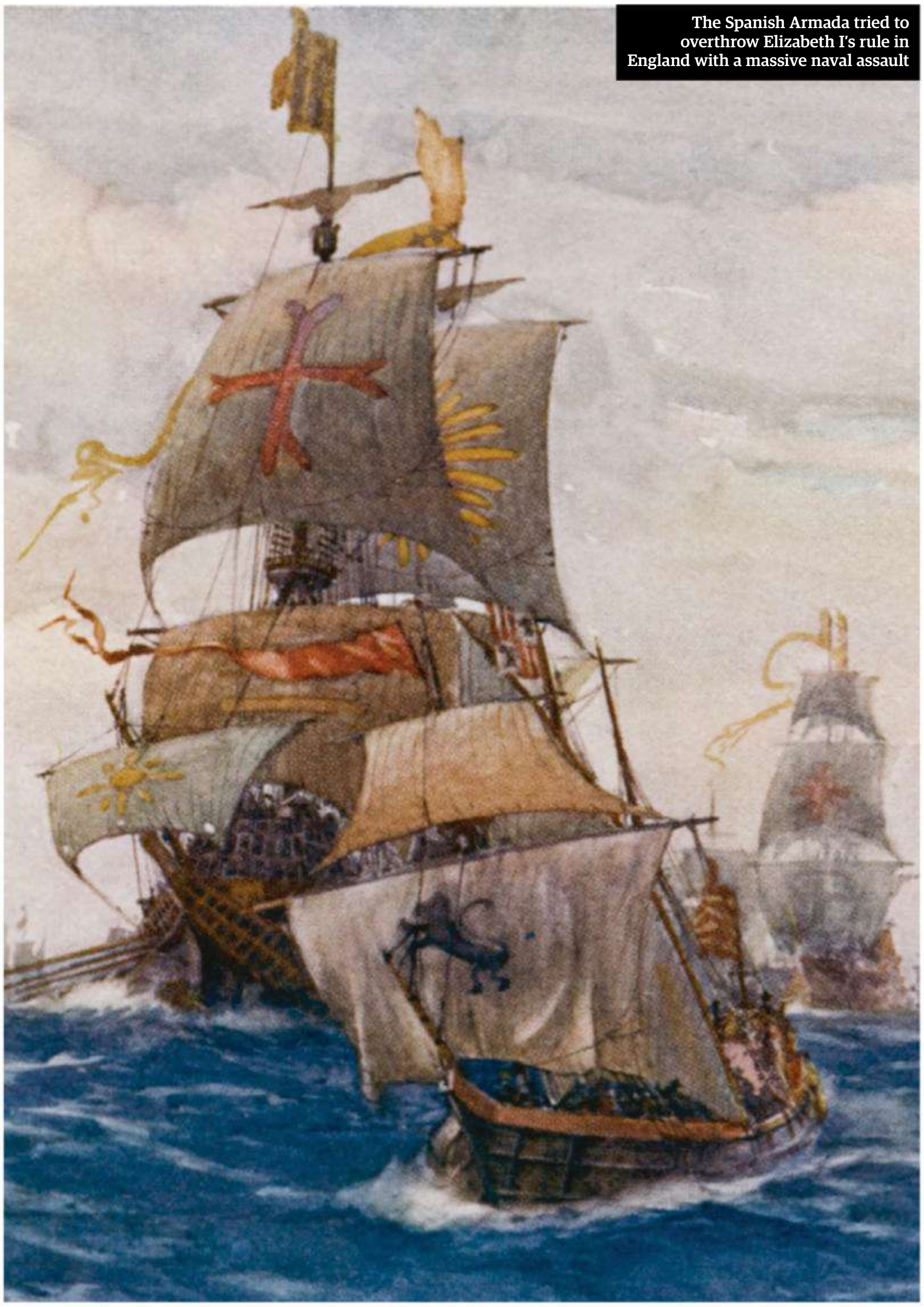
The sacking of Antwerp in 1576, a major event in the Eighty Years' War them even invited to perform in the royal court of Queen Elizabeth I. Shakespeare had also bought shares in Lord Chamberlain's Men and was becoming a powerful and influential figure.

The Reformation had changed England's approach to religion, moving the country away from its Catholic roots and into the arms of Protestantism. But it had not been as peaceful a transition as is sometimes painted. Protest leaders who encouraged more than 30,000 priests, gentry and commoners to demand a return to Catholicism in 1536 had been executed. Two years later, the reformers had banished the cult of saints, destroying shrines and banning the population of England from making pilgrimages. Riots in 1549 were repressed in the most vicious of ways – the reformers would hang priests from church towers and lop off the heads of laymen who refused to obey the new order.

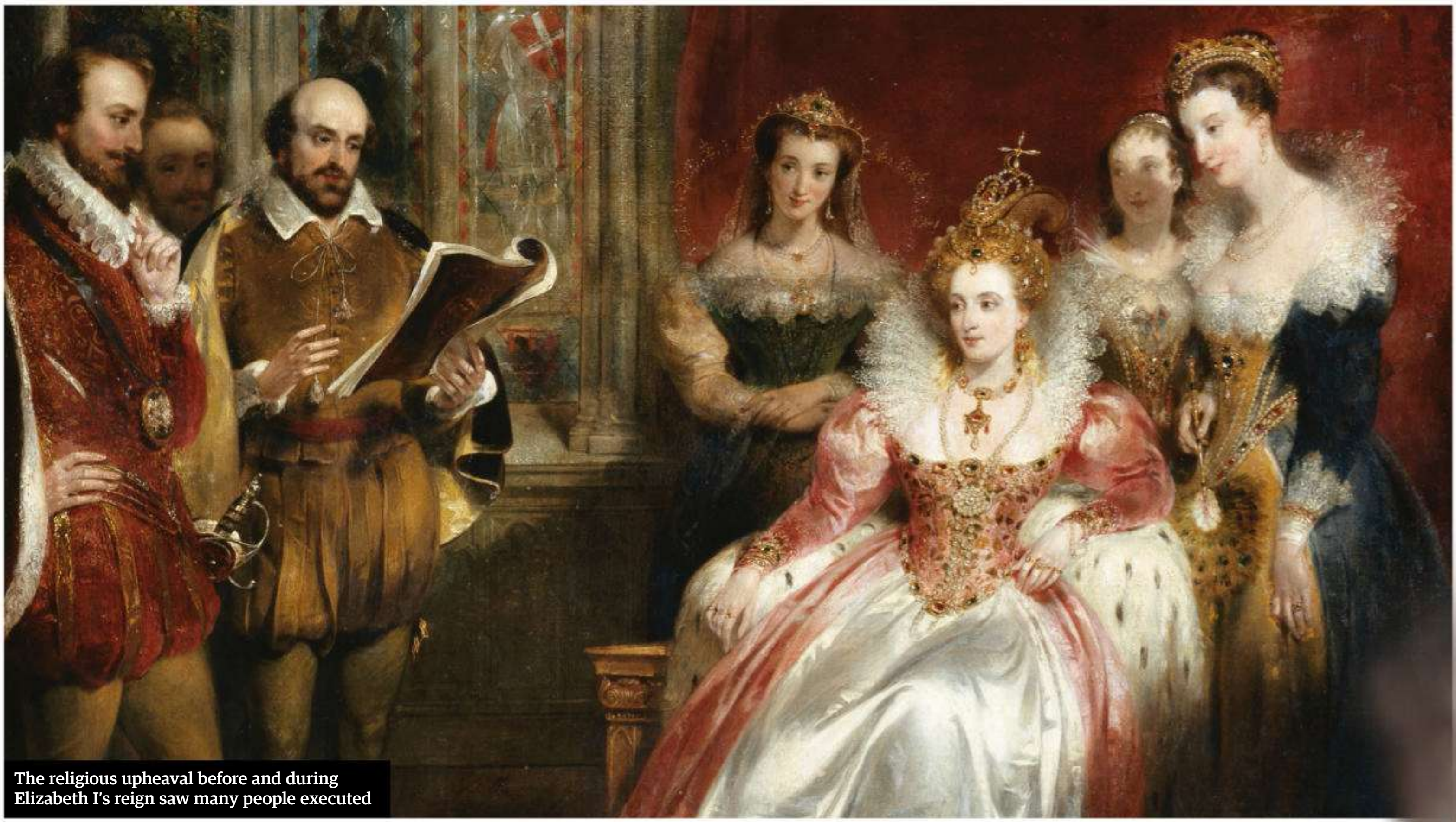
All this affected the Bard; he wasn't writing in a bubble and nor were the actors who performed his work. Clare Asquith states in *Shadowplay: the Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare*: "Shakespeare's family are thought to have been Catholics [...] his early years would have echoed to angry discussions of the impact of fines and imprisonments, the liberties taken by the Queen's commissioners, the wreckage under Edward and the wicked errors of the old King."

Speaking out against the establishment was hard – not least for those who wanted to keep their heads. Anyone wanting to put across another point of view had to be smart and Asquith believes the man who would go on to be England's most celebrated poet and playwright rebelled and devised a secret code, inserting messages and double meaning into his writing. It isn't as outlandish as it may sound; cryptology had been used since ancient times and there were examples of secret codes being used in this time period. For example, it is known that Mary, Queen of Scots used a cipher secretary called Gilbert Curle to handle her secret correspondence. It wasn't entirely sophisticated, though, so her plot to overthrow Elizabeth was soon uncovered – Catholic double agent Gilbert Gifford intercepted letters that had been smuggled out in casks of ale and reported them to Sir Francis Walsingham, who had created a school for espionage. For Catholics, certain words and key phrases stood out. For example, 'tempest' or





The Spanish Armada tried to overthrow Elizabeth I's rule in England with a massive naval assault



The religious upheaval before and during Elizabeth I's reign saw many people executed

'storm' were used to signify England's troubles, according to Asquith. So Shakespeare may well have been convinced he could change people's view of the world by writing on an entertainment and political and religious level.

First he had to work out exactly what message he wanted to put across. Philip II of Spain, who had married Mary I, felt England's Catholics had been abandoned and there had long been a promise that, if the Catholics bided their time, help would come. Relations between Spain and England had declined to an all-new low. This culminated in the sailing of 122 ships from Spain in 1588 with the aim of the Spanish Armada being to overthrow Elizabeth I and replace the Protestant regime.

The Armada was defeated but it had succeeded in creating further religious and political divisions, so the authorities were on even greater alert. Within this world Shakespeare got to work and, at first, kept things simple. "My reading is that the early plays were light, comical, critical and oppositional, written for Lord Strange's Men", asserts Asquith. The earliest plays addressed political reunion and spiritual revival. Their plots related to divided families, parallels for an England cut in two.

Asquith believes the Bard placed certain markers in his texts that signalled a second, hidden meaning. He would use opposing words such as 'fair' and 'dark' and 'high' and 'low': 'fair' and 'high' being indications of Catholicism while 'dark' and 'low' would indicate Protestantism. Asquith takes this as reference to the black clothes worn by Puritans and to the 'high' church services that would include mass as opposed to the 'low' services that didn't. If this theory is true - a matter of some debate - then it enabled Shakespeare to get specific messages across, using characters to signify the two sides and by using words commonly associated with Catholic codes. For example, according to the theory, 'love' is divided into human and spiritual and 'tempest' refers to the turbulence of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the Bard used his own terms to disguise a message that was pro-Catholic.

At the same time, Shakespeare was operating in establishment circles. "He was drawn into the orbit of the court and wrote elegant pleas for toleration to Elizabeth, in the elaborate allegorical language she was used to", says Asquith. But England was becoming more violent again. Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, rebelled against Elizabeth I, becoming Robert, Earl of Essex's lieutenant in an attempt to raise the people of London against the government. The Essex faction had ordered a performance of the 'deposition' play *Richard II* just before the rebellion and Shakespeare's company had their work cut out afterward denying complicity. The plan ended in failure in 1601, but in that same year, Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, encouraging action against unjust rule. "His more critical work supported the cause of the Earl of Essex against the [William] Cecil regime", says Asquith. If this is true, then Shakespeare really was one of the defining rebels of the period.

Critics have said for decades that the writer was against populist rebellions and supported authority and the rule of law, "but with the recent reassessment of the extent of dissidence at the end of Elizabeth's reign, Shakespeare's Elizabethan work begins to seem more oppositional", Asquith argues.

"What if the authority he upholds was not that of the breakaway Tudor state, but of the European church against which Henry VIII rebelled?" she asks. "What if he sympathised with the intellectual Puritan reformers, who felt secular monarchs like the Tudors had no business assuming spiritual authority over individual conscience? What if he, like so many contemporaries, opposed the destruction of the old English

"He devised a secret code, inserting messages and double meaning into his writing"

Codebreaking the Bard's plays

Claire Asquith on the secret codes she believes are imbued within Shakespeare's works

Titus Andronicus

Synopsis: Written between 1588 and 1593, the play is set in the latter days of the Roman Empire. Bloody in the extreme, the play explores the life of a fictional Roman general, Titus, caught in a vicious circle of revenge with the queen of the Goths, Tamora.

Rebel? Shakespeare appears to be pleading for calm among England's dissidents, having written a play that highlights suffering and repression while arguing the case against a violent rebellion. The message, claims Asquith, is very much about biding time, waiting for help in the guise of a promised invasion and, as such, it mirrored the rhetoric of Catholic leaders who stressed England would be saved via diplomacy or invasion rather than an internal uprising. "It is a gory portrayal of just the kind of state atrocities conducted in the mid-1590s, and in the previous reign as well. Yet it discourages equally bloody revenge", says Asquith.

Taming Of The Shrew

Synopsis: Written between 1590 and 1592, the courtship of Petruchio is at the heart of the play. It shows his attempts to tame the wild Katherina, a girl he loves but is rebuffed by until he manages to win her over.

Rebel? With evidence of the 'high-low' opposition language that Shakespeare used to refer to Catholics and Protestants, Katherina is "brown in hue." Her sister is called Bianca, meaning 'white' and she is the respectable one of the two. This paints Katherina to be like a reformer and in need of being brought into line. Asquith says the "oddly political language" used by the chastened shrew is "meant to alert us to the play's extra level." For those used to finding deeper meanings, the message would have been obvious, according to her. She says: "The play shows England as a warring family, the monarch helpless to stop vengeful puritans baiting afflicted Catholics."

King Lear

Synopsis: The tragedy is set in the court of an ageing monarch. He wants to pass the monarchy to his three daughters and asks them to prove they love him the best but one cannot so he splits it between two before falling into madness.

Rebel? Lear's actions caused a tumbling effect as various people were banished, reunited, imprisoned and heartbroken. Asquith claims this is an "unvarnished dramatisation of the state of James' England, a final attempt to awaken the King to the intolerable humiliations and sufferings of his Catholic subjects." She tells us the message within is clear: "If you exile true Christian spirituality – and both puritans and Catholics were exiled – the country descends into amoral anarchy." She adds: "It is worth noticing that though he discourages mob-led rebellion, he includes nine invasions in his work, and they are all portrayed as positive events."

The Winter's Tale

Synopsis: Suspicious that his childhood friend is his pregnant wife's lover, Leontes accuses his wife of infidelity and having an illegitimate child. Having ordered the newborn baby to be abandoned, he is later reunited with her, much to his delight.

Rebel? With the play believed to have been written in 1611, this was one of Shakespeare's later plays and it appears to contain a strong message: "After all the post-reformation trauma, the spirituality that was lost turns out to have been secretly preserved", says Asquith. As with *The Tempest*, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* started with suffering and ended with happiness. It showed a transition that could put past remorse to bed, highlighting the possibility that evils can be defeated and that a true home can be found for spiritualism if it is wanted. It would have encouraged the audience to keep the faith and not give up hope.

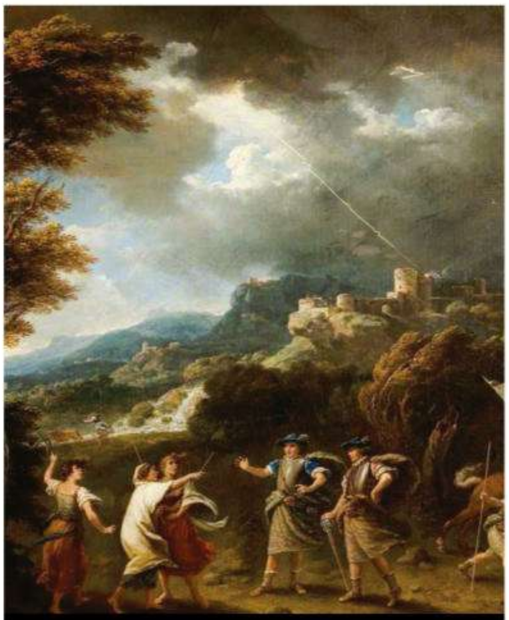
landscape, from the hostels, colleges, monasteries and hospitals to the rich iconography of churches to local roadside shrines and holy wells?"

It can be argued that the Bard personified England itself so that he could explore just why the ideas behind the Reformation had taken hold, presenting it as gullible and deluded, willing to turn its back on spiritual heritage, with the play *Two Gentlemen Of Verona* cited as evidence of this. The more elaborate plays retained the puns, wordplay and double meanings so beloved of audiences in Elizabethan times, but Asquith notes that some of Shakespeare's characters came to be increasingly dramatic and allegorical; they had a hidden spiritual meaning that transcended the literal sense of the text.

When King James assumed the throne in 1603, Catholics had assumed that he would lend them greater support than Elizabeth, given that his mother was a staunch Catholic. But that was not to be and Shakespeare must have been well aware of a growing political and religious resentment against the monarchy, with a feeling of rebellion growing. His plays in this period became more cynical, which some have speculated was a consequence of the world he was living in.

Matters came to a head with an explosive event in 1605. Five conspirators, Guy Fawkes, Thomas Wintour, Everard Digby and Thomas Percy hired a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament for a few weeks, spending time gathering gunpowder and storing it in their newly acquired space. Their plan was to blow the building sky high, taking parliamentarians and King James I with it. But their cover was blown and Guy Fawkes was taken away to be tortured into confession, the deadly rack being the instrument said to have broken him. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

At around the same time, Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*, all plays warning against unjust and persecuting rule, which many



A depiction of Macbeth from William Shakespeare's play of the same name

Shakespearean theories

He didn't really write the works

The authorship of Shakespeare's work has been the subject of debate for decades. With no original manuscripts, no mention of him even being a writer in his will and a command of Latin, Greek and other languages that would belie his apparent poor education, many believe that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford was the writer rather than the small-town boy from Stratford. And if not him, then one of 80 other historical figures that have been mentioned over the years, such as Marlowe.

He didn't even exist

Some scholars believe that the Shakespeare revered today as a playwright was actually a fictional character. They believe that the few documents relating to him were actually for a man called William Shaxper or Shakspere who was born in 1564, married and had children but became an actor and remained in such a role until his retirement. Certainly, Shakespeare's death appears to have been unmarked. Had Shakespeare been such a prominent playwright, there would surely have been many documents mourning his passing, critics say.

He was an Italian

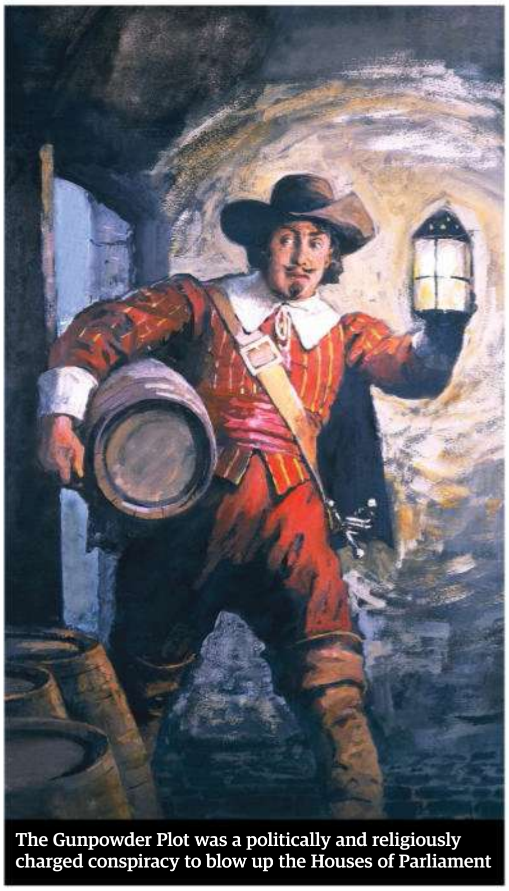
Those who argue Shakespeare was not quite who he claims he was are called anti-Stratfordians. One of their theories is that Shakespeare – or Michaelangelo Florio Crollalanza – had moved from Sicily to London, fearing the Holy Inquisition. The family name of Crollalanza was translated and became Shakespeare. Sicilian professor Martini Iuvara claims to have proof and mentions the Sicilian play Tanto Traffico Per Niente written by Crollalanza. It can, he claims, be translated into *Much Ado About Nothing*.

> "Their plan was to blow the building sky high, taking parliamentarians and King James I with it"

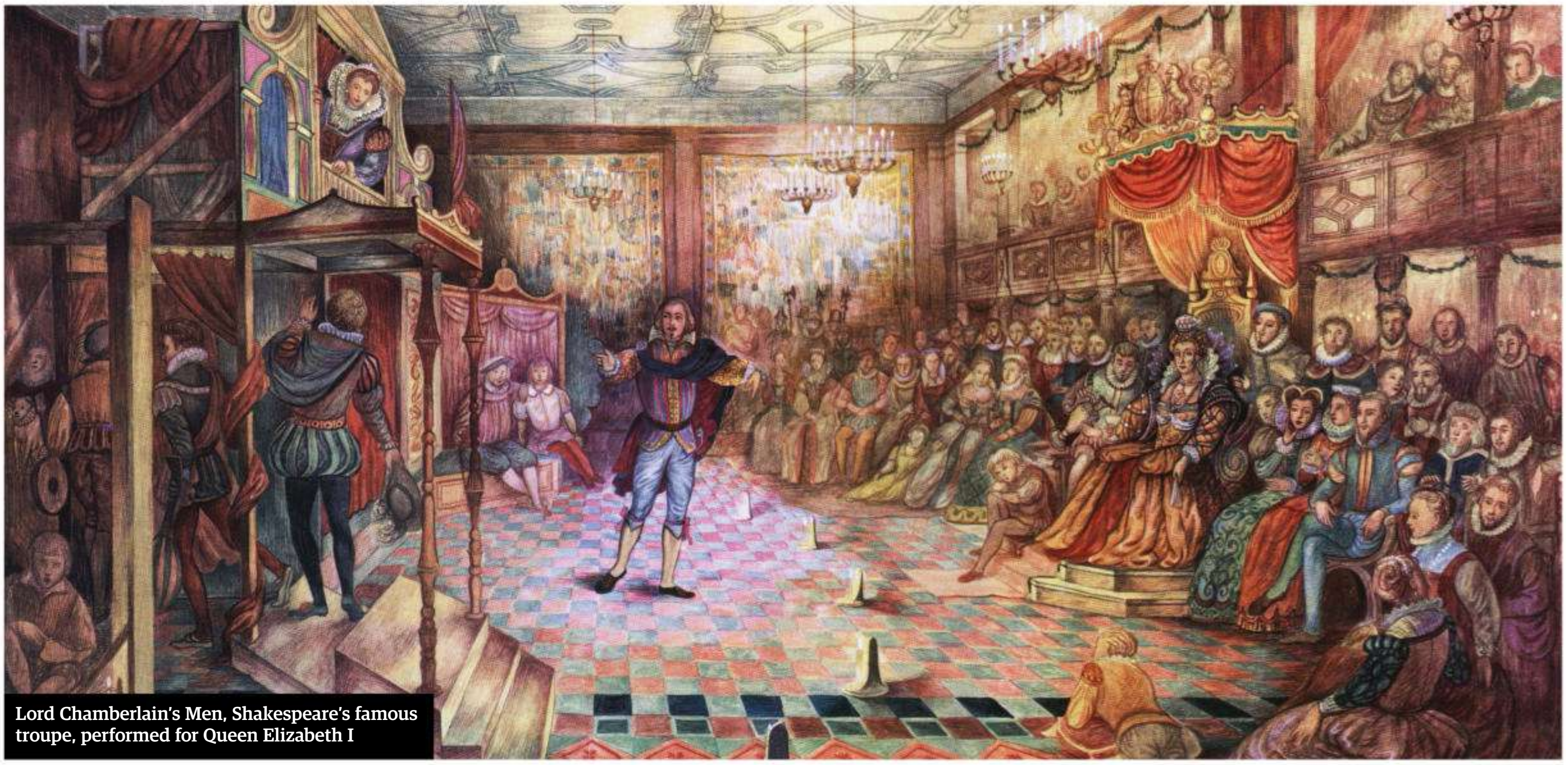
Catholics felt James I was guilty of. "My own theory is that Shakespeare, though not an outright rebel, used his increasingly privileged position to address the court and the crown, both Elizabeth, and James, on the issue of religious toleration", Asquith asserts. "He protested against the persecution and injustice perpetrated in the name of the monarch, and pleaded for religious toleration."

Such an assessment revises the prevailing thinking that Shakespeare wrote universal plays and avoided any topicality. Some literary scholars remain hostile to the idea that the playwright was involved in the volatile religious issues of the day, but could he really have ignored what was going on around him? It's plausible that he wanted to do more than merely shake the literary world; he wanted to influence politics and religion, to affect his society.

When he sat at his desk, overlooking the squalid, filthy conditions of London, William Shakespeare may have been looking out at a more enlightened nation than ever before, but is was still a city and a country where the screams of religious and political prisoners filled the corridors of cramped jail cells as torturers extracted their forced confessions. This sobering reality was a stark reminder of the perils of religious divisions that continued throughout Shakespeare's life. Was it a society that he rebelled against in his own way, through his work? The final and definitive answer to that, like some of the great man's work, is unfortunately lost to the ages.



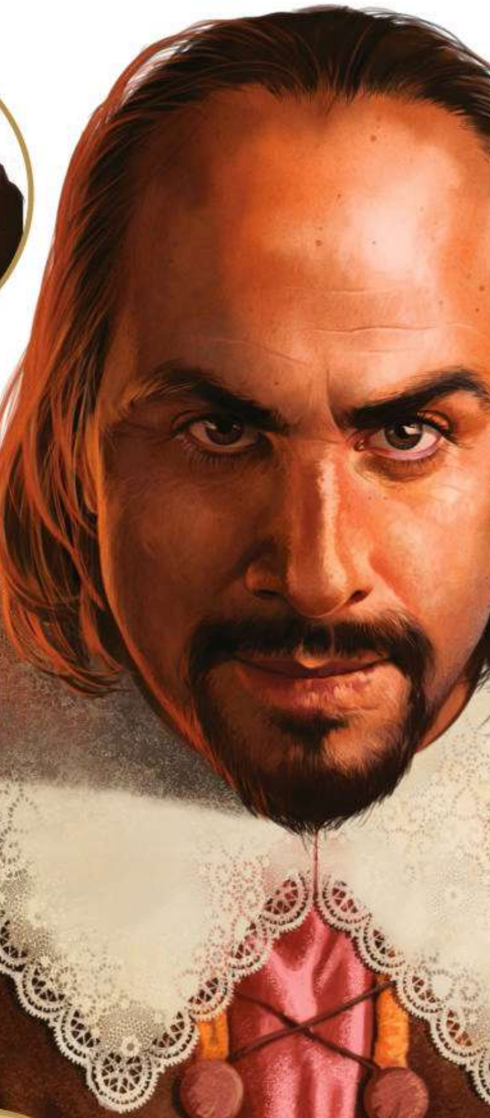
The Gunpowder Plot was a politically and religiously charged conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament



Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's famous troupe, performed for Queen Elizabeth I

Shakespeare's pressures and influences

What were the factors that helped, motivated and threatened to break the Bard?



Religion

With the death of Mary I and the accession of her half sister Elizabeth I, the religion of England changed. Elizabeth took the country towards Protestantism. It is hard to overstate just how much of an important part of everyday life religion was during Shakespeare's lifetime. During the course of the Bard's life people believed so strongly in either Catholicism or Protestantism that they refused to recant their beliefs even when they were burned alive at the stake.

James I

Previously James VI, King of Scotland, the union of the Scottish and English crowns made him the ruler of both countries, as well as Ireland. He solidified Protestantism and sanctioned the King James Version of the Bible in 1611. James was a great admirer of poetry, drama and art and it is believed Shakespeare wrote Macbeth to win his favour and, much as he did with Elizabeth, sometimes wrote to flatter one of his main patrons. Formally the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the Bard's troupe changed their name to The King's Company and received more money and performed more regularly for James than they had for Elizabeth.

Politics

Two main forces were at play during Shakespeare's lifetime in England: the monarch and religion. The monarch held ultimate power over the life of their citizens, literally the power of life and death. Staying on the right side of those in power was obviously a strong influence on the Bard and his plays as it was vital for his career and for his life that he remained in the good graces of those in power.

Elizabeth I

One of England's golden monarchs returned England to Protestantism but allowed some Catholic traditions to continue and argued for greater toleration than her sister Mary had. Much of her reign coexisted with that of Shakespeare and the Bard and his work became known to the queen and she became one of his patrons. She was undoubtedly a major influence on him and some of his poems and plays contained passages directly aimed at pleasing her.

Social mobility

For centuries, English society had been a feudal one with a very clear distinction between the upper and the lower classes. During the Bard's lifetime, this began to change and a middle class was beginning to emerge – social mobility was increasing, meaning you no longer had to born a peer to become a person of wealth and influence. Shakespeare himself is an example of this as, although born to a good family, he climbed the social strata through his success. His own social mobility and that going on around him was an influence on his work.

Playwrights and poets

Like all creative writers, Shakespeare was heavily influenced by the great writers that had gone before him. Chaucer, one of England's greatest poets, was a major influence as seen by the fact that several of the Bard's works were based on Chaucer poems. Greek writer Plutarch also provided inspiration for his works and Shakespeare sometimes copied whole passages of his work, with only minor alterations.

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Tales of Tudor medicine

In Tudor England, a toothache, a gangrenous finger and an excess of blood would be dealt with by the same man who cut your hair – the barber-surgeon

The average life expectancy in Tudor England was about 35 years, and of all those born, somewhere between a third and half died before they reached 16. Life could be a short, brutish struggle, especially for those born without wealth or privilege, but if they managed to survive to their late teens, then the chances were good that they would make it to their 50th or even 60th birthday. And just like nowadays, some people in Tudor England even lived to their 70s or 80s. For the most part, however, people were losing a war against sickness and disease that they barely understood, let alone knew how to fight effectively.

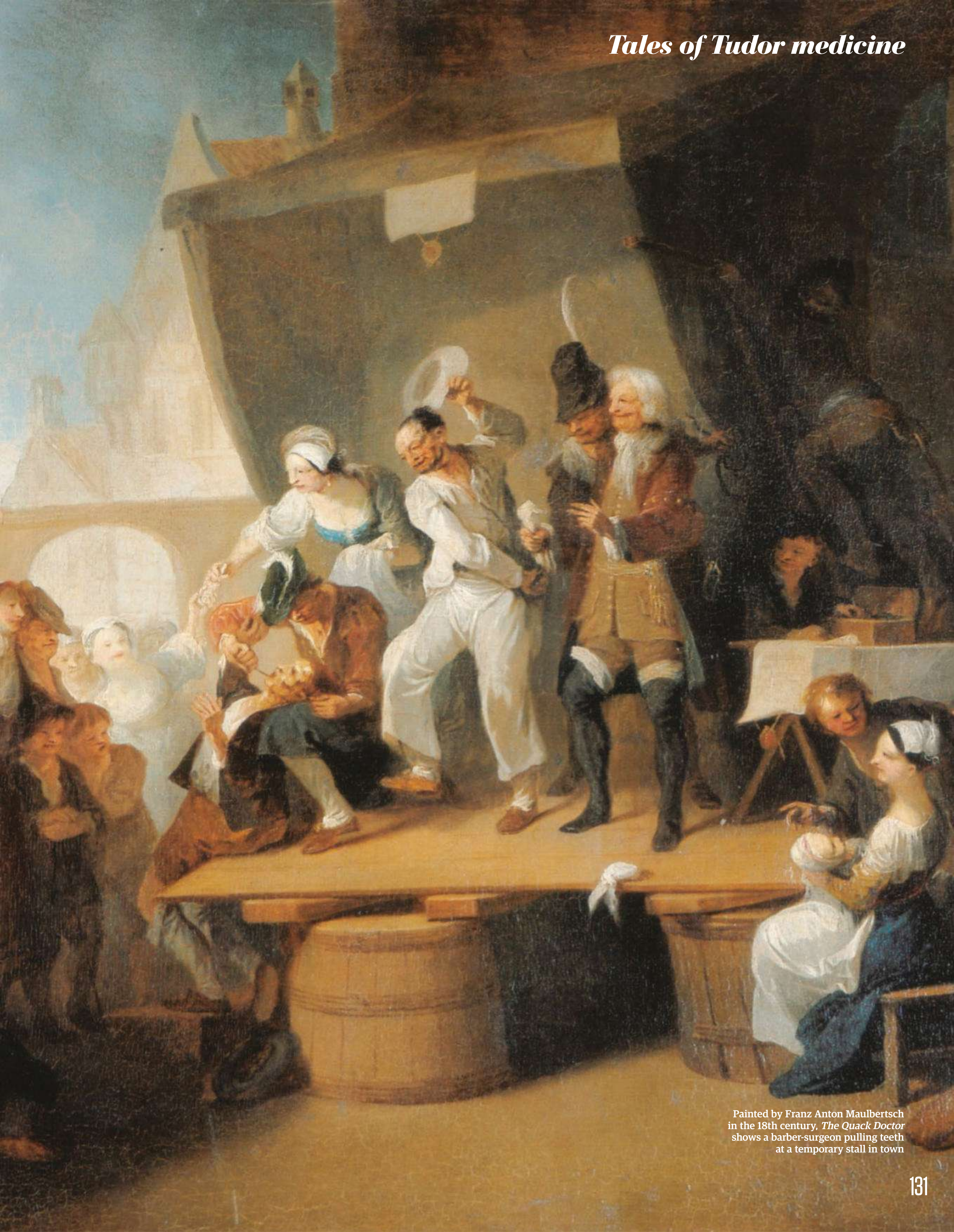
It wasn't until after James Stewart took the throne, closing the Tudor period, that William Harvey's theory of blood circulating around the body in a closed system gained a foothold in medical science; or that Athanasius Kircher started researching disease using a microscope; or that Robert Hooke discovered cells, leading Antonie van Leeuwenhoek to discover bacteria. Just a generation or two before in the Tudor period, the revolutions in medical science were only just starting to gain pace, and most people believed that your astrological sign, your adherence to the advice of a poem and the composition of your urine were the real diagnostic tools. They were damnably dirty days, too.

Timber and whitewashed wattle-and-daub walls pressed into each other over the roads of towns and cities, forming arched roofs over the stinking streets and enclosing the stench. Citizens slopped their night-buckets out into the open sewers beneath, which drained along channels thick with lice, fleas and black rats, dragging discarded and rotting rubbish with them. The physician John Snow wouldn't be born until 1813, and until his ground-breaking research on the Broad Street cholera epidemic in London and its spread through the water pumps was published, no one would know that all this infected liquid was permeating and poisoning the wells, creating hotspots of infection that seemed like cursed neighbourhoods to the stricken populace.

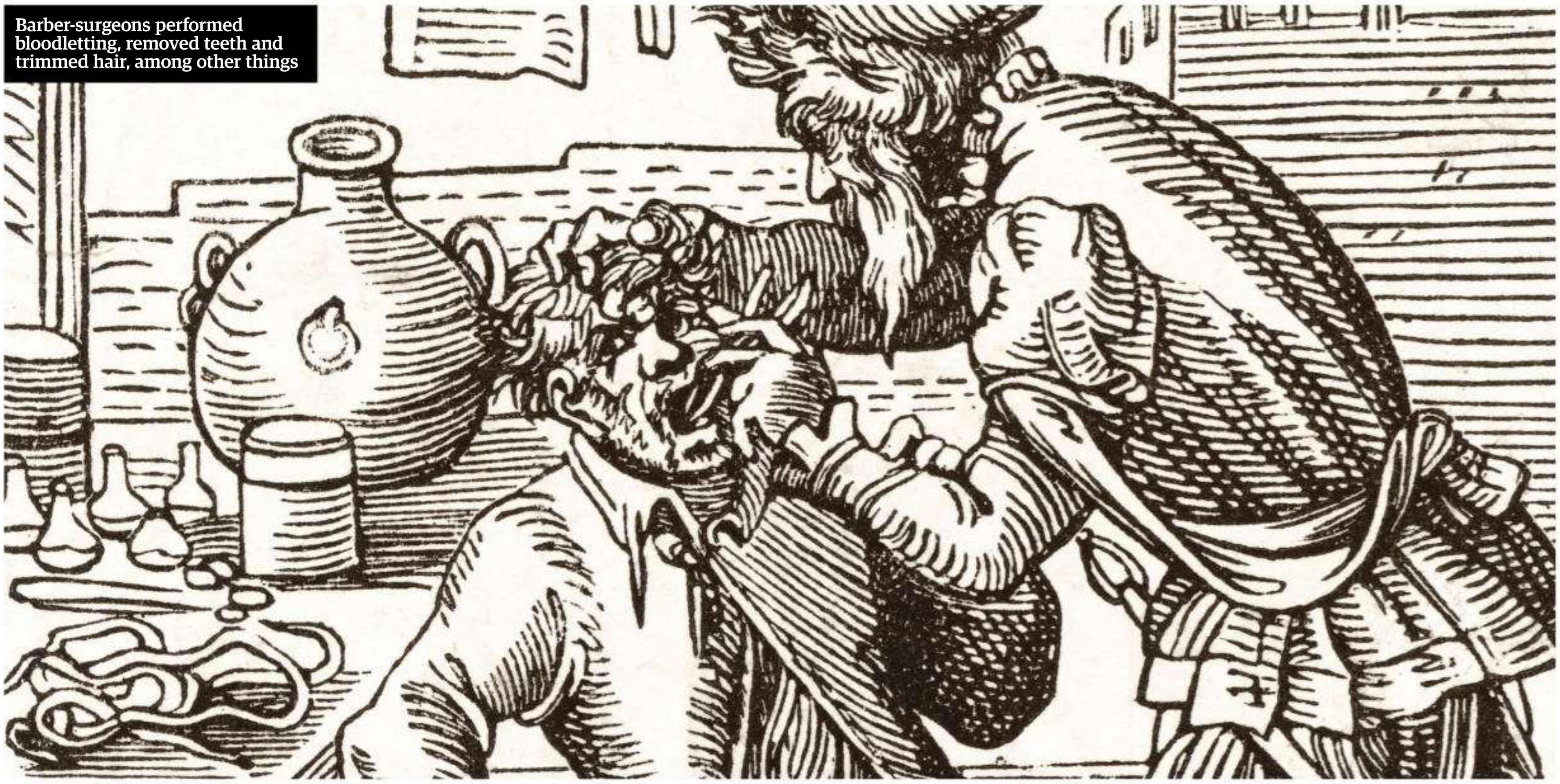
Tudor England was woefully ignorant of effective sanitation – many believed that bathing was dangerous, opening the pores to malevolent miasma (bad air) that would make them sick – and people instead followed the guidance of, chiefly, learned doctors, local wise women and a very multi-skilled kind of surgeon.

> Tudor medicine mostly consisted of herbal remedies, known as 'simples', and most women would have known the recipes

Favoured by Henry VIII and those who could afford them were the physicians, who were gentlemen, academics and costly. Henry himself was very interested in medicine, founding the Royal College of Physicians in 1518, merging the



Painted by Franz Anton Maulbertsch in the 18th century, *The Quack Doctor* shows a barber-surgeon pulling teeth at a temporary stall in town



Barber-surgeons performed bloodletting, removed teeth and trimmed hair, among other things

Company of Barbers and Fellowship of Surgeons into a single company in 1540 and passing several other acts of parliament throughout his reign that established licensing regulations for medical practitioners. These would stand for the next three centuries. He even had an early insight into the spread of disease, long before Snow, that led him to implement quarantines during the later plague years and introduce basic disinfection, as well as attempt to improve the sewers and water supplies. But he always trusted his physicians and their intuitive, though often incorrect, ideas – they were the experts, after all.

Specialists existed, too. Since the Black Death had arrived in Europe during the 14th century, pandemics had re-occurred over the years and created a new class of physicians – plague doctors. Thickly robed from head to toe, the plague doctor would enter a patient's chamber with a pungent air of herbs and oils, cloying bundles of clove, camphor, laudanum and bergamot hanging from pouches at their waist to protect against miasma, and amulets worn around the neck and waist to ward off sickness. They were always gloved and carried a cane so they wouldn't have to touch their patients during examinations, and wore a striking, beaked mask with glass lenses sewn in to see through; the beak was an air filter, filled with another heady mix of aromatics. Though they didn't understand it for the right reasons, some of these precautions were successful and helped the plague doctors dodge death.

Astrology played a big part in Tudor medicine, and many physicians would prescribe treatment based on the patient's star sign

Most physicians were less adventurously attired, however, and instead emerged from seven years of study – often overseas at the esteemed medical college Salerno – in stiff suits, bearing astrological charts to determine which kinds of medicines and incisions should be avoided based upon astrological signs. They would mentally consult and then recite lines of the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum (The Salernitan Code Of Health)*, an archaic anthology of medical advice in poetic form that was an authoritative textbook at the time, translated into dozens of languages and hugely popular because of its memorable rhymes dispensing such sage advice as this:

Of Pork
Inferior far to lamb is flesh of swine,
Unqualified by gen'rous draughts of wine;
But add the wine, and lo! you'll quickly find
In them both food and medicine combined.

And also this more pertinent verse:

Of the Four Humours in the Human Body
Four humours form the body in this style,
Atrabilis, Blood, Phlegm and yellow Bile.
With earth atrabilis may well compare,
Consuming fire with bile, and blood with air.
Blood is moist, warm, and vital as the air;
While phlegm is cold, through water's copius share;
Bile burns like fire, where'er it flows along;
Gall, dry and cool, to earth bears likeness strong.

Henry's fall

Henry VIII displayed two wildly different personalities during his tenure as king of England – in his early days, he was a sporty, courtly and charismatic chap described as having a beautiful face and shapely calves, while in his latter years he became a man of fearsome temper and girth. He was seen as cruel and fearfully whispered of in the halls of Greenwich Palace. He was also said to stink in his later years – apparently he could be smelt from three rooms away.

Historians believe there is a connection between Henry's health and his shift in personality. Henry began life in excellent health and was renowned for his athletic pursuits, among which were wrestling, tennis and jousting. However, he may have contracted smallpox aged 23 and definitely picked up malaria at some point in his 20s, which was to exacerbate his struggle with the leg ulcers he later developed. The first recorded mention of his ulcers comes in 1527, when he was 36 – shortly after recovering from a tennis injury that left his foot so swollen he took to wearing a single, loose velvet slipper. Henry was afflicted with a "sorre legge" for the rest of his life.

When he was 44, he suffered a terrible jousting accident that threw him to the ground and saw his armoured horse land on top of him. He was "without speech" (unconscious) for two hours, and one of the ulcers tore open. This ulcer left Henry in chronic pain for the rest of his life, and physicians insisted on keeping the wound open in order to drain it of excessive humours – actually stitching the skin back and inserting gold pellets into the wound to keep it open while it drained. Unable to exercise and racked with pain, Henry's waist ballooned further, and he developed a filthy temper. Historians note that his cycles of marriage and divorce sped up after the accident, as did the number of executions he ordered, and by the time he died 12 years later, his legs were so infected he had to be carried around on a chair.

This, essentially, was the core of medical thinking in Tudor England, and it all went back to an Ancient Greek scholar called Galen. He was a consolidator of medical knowledge in his time, gathering all that he learned and dictating his books to teams of scribes. Galen was so prolific that, despite much of his work being destroyed, his writings represent almost half of all the Ancient-Greek texts we have today. His theories were lost for a time after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire as Galen's work, which had not been translated into Latin during the days of the empire, fell into obscurity in the west. Some of his works had been exported to and survived in the east, though, and were later rediscovered in Europe, at which point ideas such as Galen's belief in the four humours as a governing force of health became accepted as scientific fact.

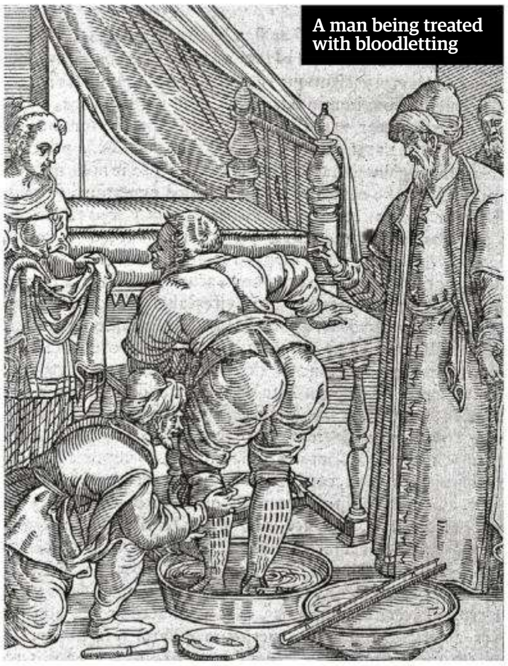
> One 'cure' for smallpox was to hang red curtains in the patient's room. It was thought that the red light was medicinal

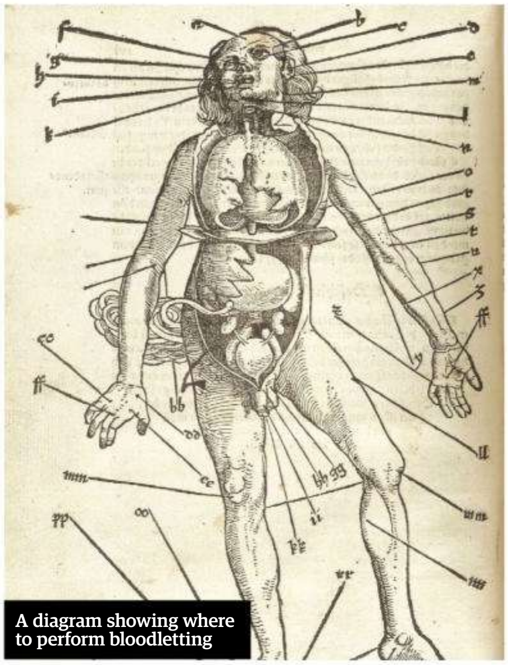
Blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile – the humours – were tied to the elements, the seasons and to your personality and physical characteristics. Fiery sanguinous folk, for example, were thought to be red-cheeked and rude of health, maybe a little mischievous but otherwise quite sweet. Melancholics, ruled by earth and black bile (atrabilis), were thin, sickly and introspective. Phlegmatics were foolish and Cholerics were ambitious. Most important was the balance of the four humours within a person – evacuation of any excess of a humour was the foundation of many courses of treatment, whether that meant providing laxatives or leeches. So using their knowledge of a patient's birth sign, the phase of the moon and the positions of the stars, combined with a thankfully more helpful physical examination to observe symptoms, and then the advice of the *Regimen*, physicians would diagnose patients and recommend various tinctures, elixirs and practices to alleviate their suffering, as well as perform more hands-on operations where necessary.

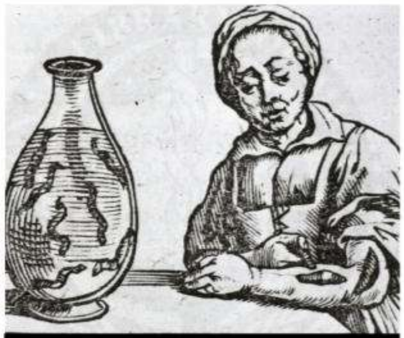
Plague doctors, for example, would lance the buboes of the infected, while physicians performed phlebotomies to drain excess blood and used trepans to tap holes into heads that were suffering migraines. For the most part, though, seeing a physician in Tudor England was a little like seeing your doctor today – they'd prescribe a course of medicine and send the patient for a visit to the local pharmacy.

In this case, the pharmacy was the apothecary. Serving the rich and poor alike, it was an emporium of home-made remedies and locally harvested medicinals, not to mention more exotic ingredients. The apothecaries were governed by the Grocer's Guild, so there were always also boxes of confectionaries and perfumes among the herbs and tonics, and they usually kept their own gardens to supplement their stock. It was in high demand, too – the Tudors took dill for digestion, dandelions for boils, liquorice for lung problems, wormwood for stomach pains, onions and garlic to create poultices for wounds; they treated headaches with sage, lavender, rose and bay; and they cured headlice with tobacco juice. There were scores of medicinal recipes and, whether a physician or a wise woman sent them, they would pick up their prescription at the apothecary.

If a patient found themselves in need of a tooth pulling, however, or perhaps a more serious operation, then they would instead continue on down to the street until they saw the barber's


A man being treated with bloodletting


A diagram showing where to perform bloodletting


Leeches were another common form of treatment, used to remove 'bad blood'

Diary of a barber-surgeon

An hour after sunrise

Just opening up and this poor fellow is hammering on the door, comes in with terrible toothache. Looked like the tooth worms were deep into their cups and the clove wasn't driving them out, so it had to be pulled. Nearly spilled the whisky when he saw the pliers.

Mid-morning

Urine diagnosis for a gentleman feeling out of sorts; too cold and foamy, an excess of phlegm causing a common cold. Recommended some of those excellent cinnamon, ginger and mustard biscuits from the lady down the way and a cooked apple to help fight off infection.

Noon

Went down to the marshes to buy leeches from the thatchers collecting reeds. Also purchased more whisky, bandages, fox grease, dried toad and marjoram from the apothecary. Butcher is still charging exorbitantly for his donkey and pig skins and I cannot seem to find a decent smith for my next set of scalpels.

Early afternoon

Amputation went well – cut and tied 50 or so veins and arteries in a little over nine minutes, I believe a personal best. Patient roared something awful, though, and the cauterisation was messy. Good thing I got those leeches – I pray he doesn't end up needing the maggots.

Twilight

The early-rising merchants are dropping in on their way home for haircuts. I must remember to empty out all of the bleeding bowls later. It was a little unprofessional having to empty one for use with one customer who had filled his bowl while another waited with half a beard trimmed.

Late evening

Closed the shop for the day, swept up the hair and sopped up the blood. Most of the hair can be salvaged for the premium perukes, but the more soiled batches will have to be used in lower value wigs for the market. I must remember to empty all of those bleeding bowls tomorrow.

pole above their head, the spiralling red and white stripes signifying the bloodied bandages of the barber-surgeon. These were the qualified knife wielders who handled the business end of medical care, performing an amputation in the morning, wiping off their tools and then trimming a moustache in the afternoon. Often, they'd begin with a uroscopy, smelling and tasting a urine sample to determine its humouric composition and then comparing its colour to charts. A hugely common treatment in those days was bloodletting, going back to Galen's theory. From bad tempers to fevers, an excess of blood in the body was to blame for many problems, and both barber-surgeons and physicians had a wide array of instruments to help let some out. Using scarificators, they'd make scores of tiny incisions along the backs of patient's legs and collect the excess in a special bleeding bowl, sometimes marked with a scale in fluid ounces, or instead they'd use lancets, leeches or fleams to balance the humours.

In 1543, Andreas Vesalius donated a preserved skeleton to the University of Basel, where it is still on display today

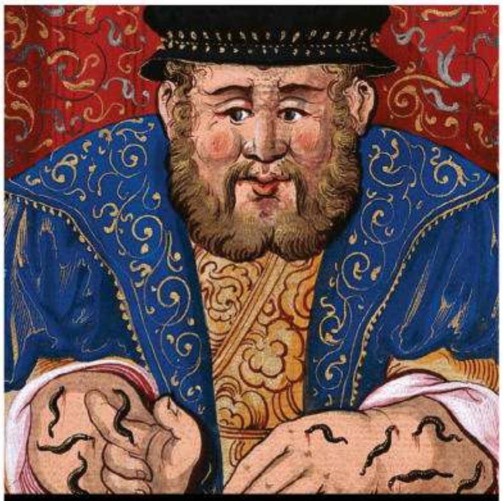
Throughout the Tudor period, however, new ideas began to emerge that would change everyone's perception of health, the body and medicine forever. In 1546, for example, Girolamo Fracastoro published a book called *On Contagion* that argued sicknesses and infections were actually spread by 'disease seeds'.

There was a man named Theophrastus von Hohenheim who styled himself as Paracelsus, in opposition to the Ancient Roman writer Celsus and his book *De Medicina*, which had been published in 1478 and quickly become a standard medical text despite being as old as Christ. Paracelsus – 'beyond Celsus' – was alchemically trained, and he challenged this outdated way of thinking, introducing the use of chemicals and metals to medicine, such as using mercury to treat syphilis. He's widely regarded as the founder of toxicology and rejected teachings that weren't based on observations.

Another man to reject the teachings of thousand-year-old orators was Andreas Vesalius, one of the greatest surgeons of his time (though a physician, rather than a barber). As well as forming the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London, Henry VIII also legalised human dissection in 1540. This meant that doctors such as Vesalius could finally perform human autopsies, often in large theatres where students could observe, and gain a better understanding of how the body worked.

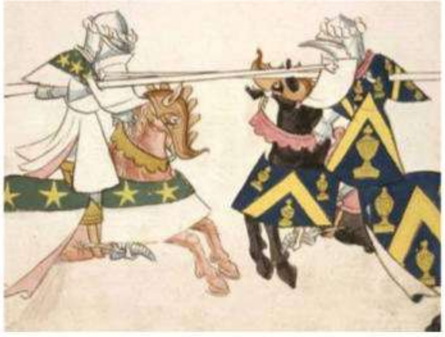
Following the instructions of Galen, which had been based on the bodies of pigs due to the similar illegality of human dissection in his time, doctors found that Galen was wrong. So Vesalius made his own observations and published a ground-breaking book called *De Humani Corpus Fabrica (On The Fabric Of The Human Body)* that contained beautifully illustrated, incredibly accurate diagrams of the human body – something people had never seen before, made possible by both the legalisation of dissection and the detail afforded by mass-printable woodcut illustrations. To recreate the experience of an autopsy, Vesalius also included flaps that could be lifted up to reveal layers of muscle and bone, veins and arteries, the positions of organs and the insides of the brain. The new insight that *The Fabric* gave to Tudor doctors was invaluable, helping to clear the air of Galen's obscuring theories on humours and miasmas.

Tudor England was an age of great discovery for medicine, the beginning of a revolutionary period of change that would see the arrival of sanitation, chemical drugs and microbiology. While for those receiving the sharp attention of a barber-surgeon or looking along the beak of a plague doctor it may have seemed a brutal time to be alive, it was a time of changing attitudes that would soon lead to the beginnings of modern medical practices, and the levels of both comfort and survivability that we enjoy today when in the care of a doctor.



This illustration was part of a manuscript telling the story of an overweight king who tried to extract his fat using leeches

"Physicians performed phlebotomies to drain excess blood and used trepans to tap holes into heads that were suffering migraines"



Defining moment

Henry VIII's jousting accident

24 January 1536

During a jousting tournament at Greenwich Palace, King Henry VIII is thrown off his horse, which lands on him, and falls unconscious for two hours. The accident nearly kills him and marks a turning point in his life, leading historians to wonder if he incurred a brain injury. It was also said to have shocked Anne Boleyn so greatly that it caused the miscarriage of their son. When Henry found out, he turned against Anne, believing she would never provide him with a male heir, and within half a year he had her executed and married his next wife, Jane Seymour.

Timeline

157 CE

Galen's work begins
Ancient Greek physician Galen is making his name as a doctor, treating injured gladiators and writing his medical texts. His work will inform medical education throughout the Western Roman Empire.
157 CE

Manuscripts lost
Romulus Augustus, last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, is deposed and the empire falls. Galen's work, which has not been translated into Latin, falls into obscurity for hundreds of years.
476 CE

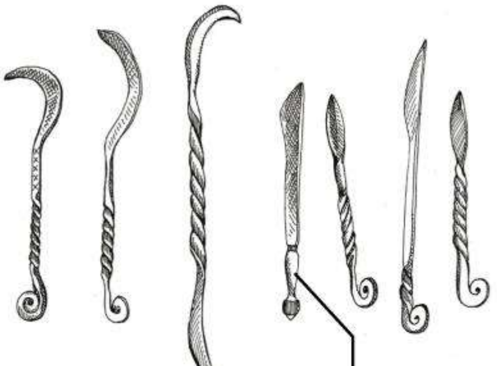
Textbook translation
Guy de Chauliac completes his *Chirurgia Magna (Great Surgery)*, drawing heavily on the recently rediscovered works of Galen, translated by Niccolò Deoprepio of Reggio. It becomes a standard medical textbook.
1363

Royal charter
Edward IV grants a royal charter to the Barber's Guild, who become the Company of Barbers, granting them regulatory power over the practice of surgery in London.
1462

Poetry in medicine
The *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, believed to have first been written in the 12th or 13th century, is published and quickly gains scholarly approval, and widespread recitations.
1480

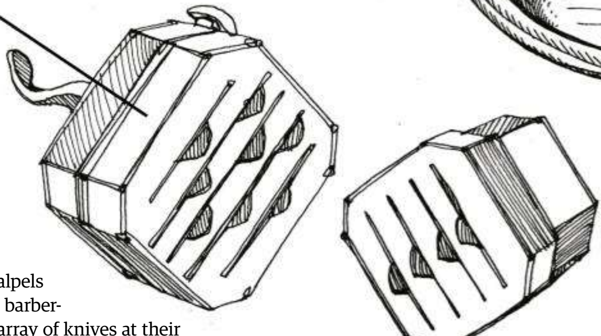
Midwifery manual
Der Rosengarten (*The Rose Garden*, published in England as *The Birth Of Mankind*), one of the most detailed books about childbirth so far, is written by Eucharius Rosslin, becoming a standard manual for midwives.
1513

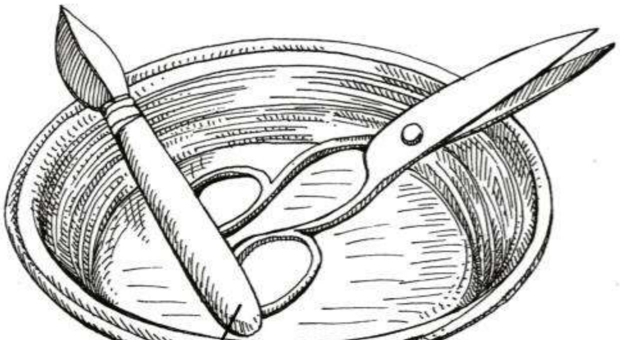
Tools of the trade



Scarificator

A precise, painful-looking piece of work, the scarificator was a multiplication of the lancet blade. Tiny slices of metal sit in rows and enable the blood-letter to speed up their work, quickly carving out exact measures of blood in regiments of light surface wounds across the patient's body.





Lancet

A core tool of the phlebotomist, lancets were small triangular blades with a groove to channel spilled blood, which would be inserted into key points around the patient's body depending on their particular imbalance of humours and astrological readings, then drain away a healthy amount of blood.

Fleam

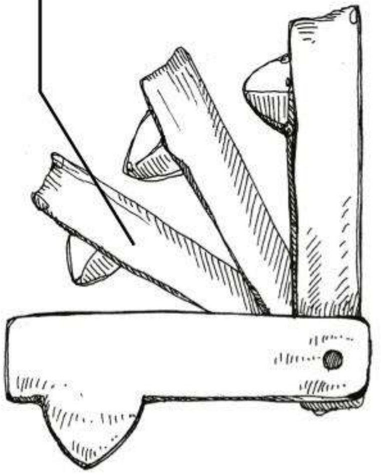
Similar to the lancet, the fleam had a small triangular blade designed to puncture veins, but this instrument was made to be as fast, accurate and painless as possible. It came with a special fleam stick, and if you tapped the tool with the stick, then the attached blade would instantly pierce the skin.

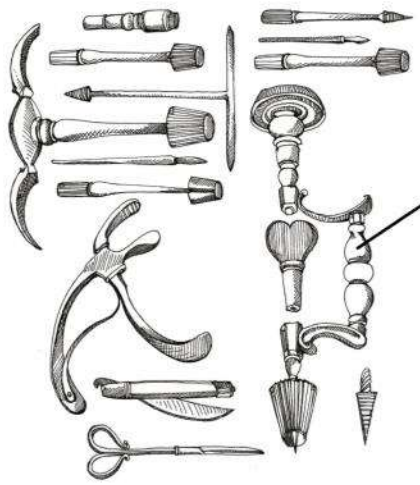
Knife

Ranging from tiny scalpels to great meat carvers, barber-surgeons had a wide array of knives at their disposal. Depending on the hygiene standards of the surgeon in question, you could live or die depending on the cleanliness of the blade – more often than not, they'd simply be rinsed in cold water between uses.

Trepan

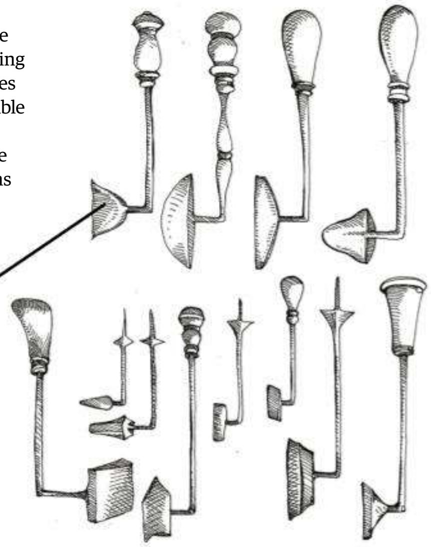
Used to bore holes into the skull, the trepan was essentially a bone-grinding corkscrew. At the time, most illnesses of the head were thought to be curable by exposing the insides of it to a little more fresh air, whether they be migraines, epileptic fits or symptoms of ADHD.





Cautery iron

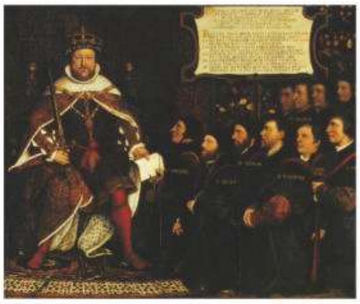
When amputations needed to be made, barber-surgeons used a great circular knife that could whip all the meat off a bone in one stroke, followed by a heavy saw in as few seconds as possible. They would then seal the wound by stretching pig skin across it and using a hot cautery iron to burn everything shut. No anaesthetics beyond alcohol, mind.



Defining moment

The Company of Barbers and Surgeons
1540

The roles of barbers and surgeons are further defined as the Barber's Guild and the Fellowship of Surgeons are merged into a single organisation. Barbers can no longer practice surgery and surgeons can no longer cut hair or shave. Both can continue their dental work.



Defining moment

Galen's era ends 1543

Andreas Vesalius publishes his series on the human body, which acts as a catalyst for the end of Galen's domination over medical thinking. Looking at the body layer by layer, in meticulously crafted pages, Vesalius mapped out the bones, muscles and ligaments, veins, arteries, nerves and organs. Observational science takes over as a new way of thinking and the beginnings of modern biology are born.

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Medical school
Henry VIII founds the Royal College of Physicians in London. After 1523, the esteemed college would be responsible for managing the licenses of medical practitioners throughout England.
1518

The Great Surgery Book
Paracelsus publishes *Die Grosse Wundartzney* (*The Great Surgery Book*), firmly establishing his reputation in medicine and enabling him to better pursue his theories on toxic substances.
1536

A new theory
Girolamo Fracastoro proposes his theory of the spread of disease through spores with *On Contagion*, which remained influential until the advent of germ theory and began to replace a fear of noxious miasma.
1546

The king is dead
Henry VIII dies, spending his last days weak from the pain of his erupting ulcers and mad with fever. He passes the throne on to young Edward VI, just nine years of age.
1547

Back to black
The Black Death strikes again, killing more than 30,000 people in London. The next, and final, outbreak of the plague will be in 1665, at which point Yersinia pestis would finally fade into history.
1603

1745

Surgically removed
Surgeons decide to split from barbers once and for all by forming their own Company of Surgeons, which would go on to become the Royal College of Surgeons in 1800.
1745

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Change & Legacy

The Tudor period was one of great change. Discover its lasting effects for England, and the rest of the world, here

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Motivated by intense greed and love, how Henry dissolved the monasteries

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How Elizabeth I spearheaded an ambitious age of exploration, in search of new nations and riches

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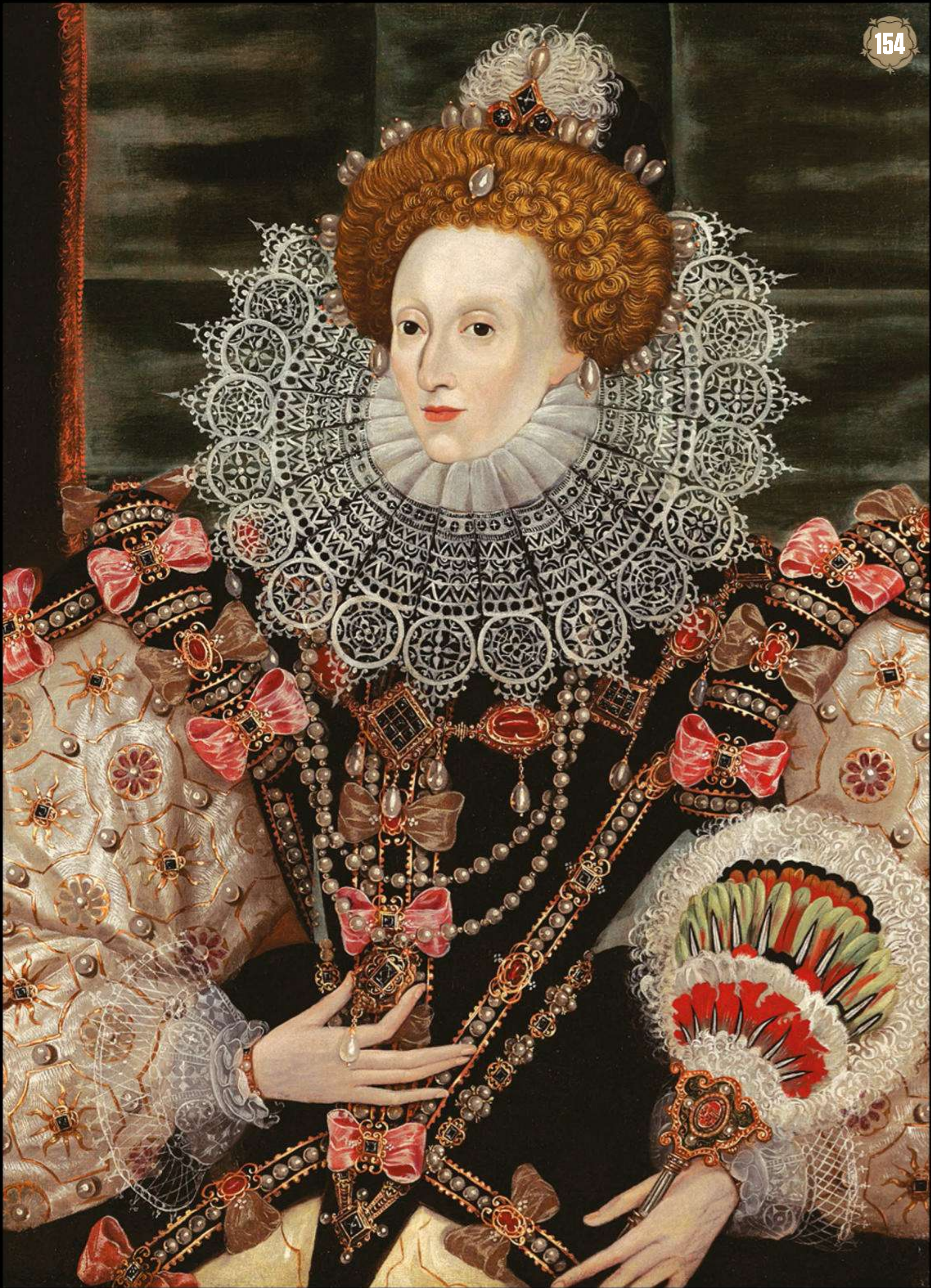
Find out about the artistic revolution that came from Mainland Europe to England



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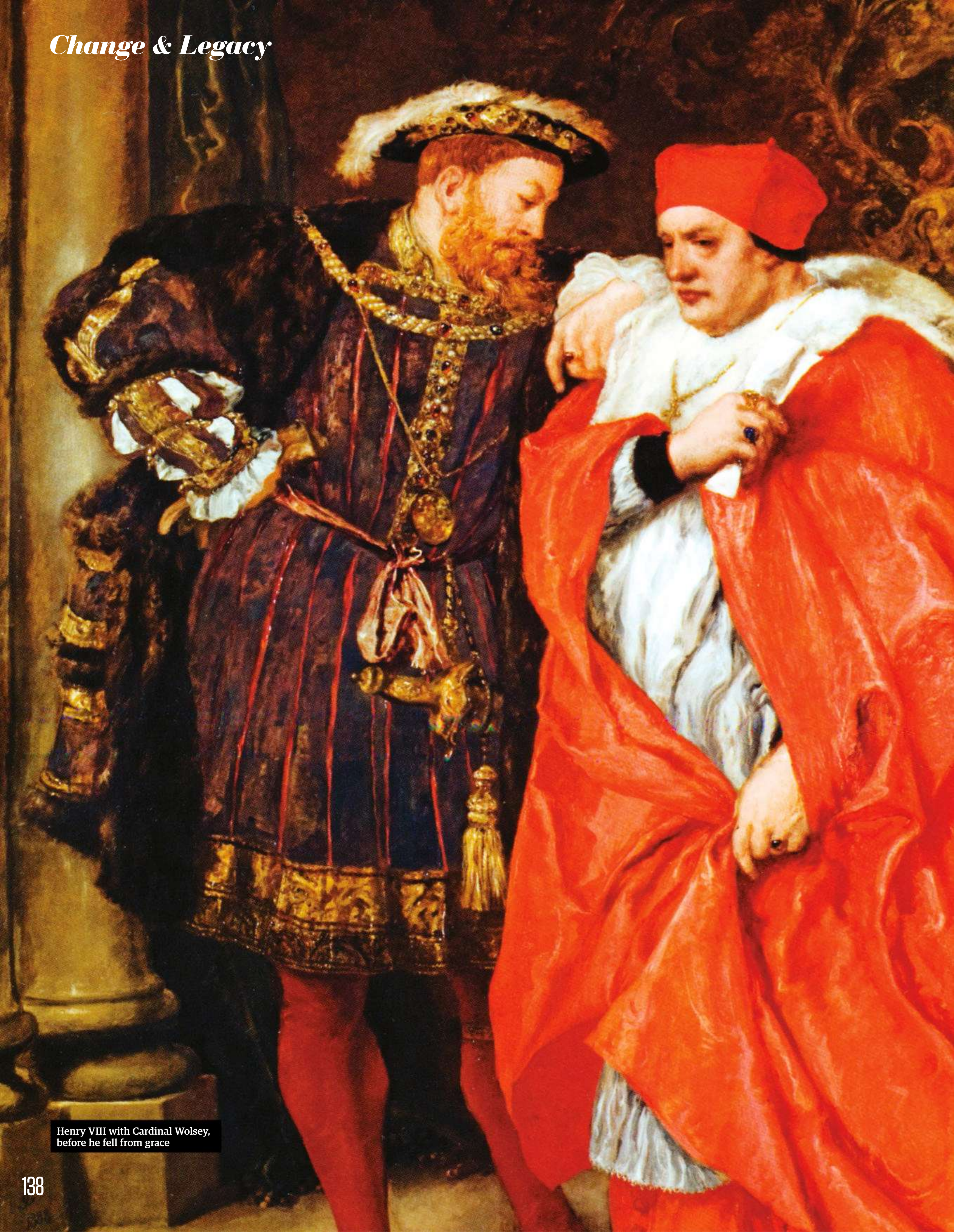


Henry VIII with Cardinal Wolsey, before he fell from grace

Henry versus the church

Motivated by greed, love and a thirst for power, King Henry VIII changed the face of religion in England forever

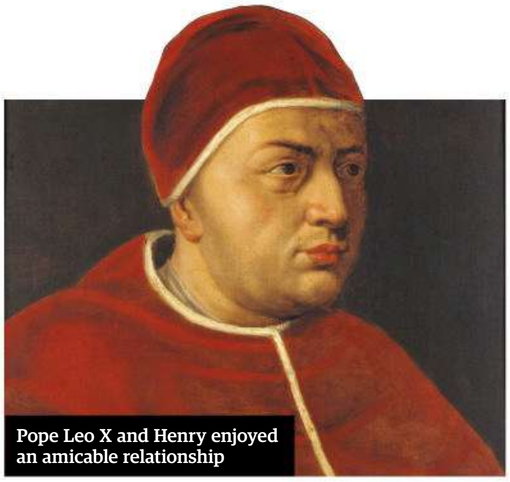
An infamous womaniser and formidable warmonger, Henry VIII was a man accustomed to getting his way. Merciless with his affairs in court, he cut an imposing figure and was feared by many around him. Nothing would stand in the way of him preserving his father's legacy – not even, as history would come to find, the greatest religion in the world at the time.

> "Henry believed his first marriage had been cursed by God"

The Reformation was one of the most revolutionary events ever to take place in English history, and with a stroke, Henry VIII ended 1,000 years of papal control, displaced thousands of religious figures and – eventually – brought religion to the masses for the first time. But like many things in Henry's life, this didn't come easily, and matters of the heart, the royal purse and sovereignty meshed together to make Henry's break with Rome a complicated process.

By the end of the 16th century, monasticism had almost entirely disappeared from other European states, with many adopting Lutheranism or Reformation instead, and those maintaining Catholicism approaching the faith in greatly reduced numbers and in a radically changed form. These changes were prompted by a dissatisfaction with the general state of religious life, regarded by many as too lavish and opulent. Indeed, religious houses in 16th-century England alone were in control of about two-fifths of parish benefices in the country, owned about a quarter of the nation's landed wealth and had no issue with spending half of all ecclesiastical income – which added up to a significant sum.

Kings and princes throughout Europe faced severe financial difficulties because of rising expenditures – armies, fighting ships and fortifications didn't come cheap, after all. Most would, sooner or later, plunder the monastic wealth that was regarded by many as excessive and idle; Protestant kings would justify this by claiming divine authority while Catholic kings would persuade the papacy of their great need for revenue. Of course, Henry and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell were constantly seeking ways to redirect ecclesiastical income to the Crown's coffers, but England's break from Rome – and Catholicism



Pope Leo X and Henry enjoyed an amicable relationship

The Pope's Influence

Henry VIII was a religious man who put a great deal of stock into his Catholic faith – it was, after all, a passage in the Book of Leviticus that convinced him his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was unholy. Up until this point, England's relationship with Rome and the pope, who sat at the very head of the Catholic church, had been largely peaceful. Indeed, religious scriptures referring to the pope as the voice of God were common in English churches, and men of the cloth would give sermons celebrating the divine relationship between the pope and the creator.

Pope Julius II was in command of the church when Henry acceded to the throne in 1509. Four years later, he was followed by Pope Leo X. In 1521, Henry wrote the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (*The Defence Of The Seven Sacraments*) – his answer to the attacks of Lutheranism on many aspects of the Catholic faith, which was seen as excessive and indulgent by many in Europe. In gratitude, Leo X awarded Henry the title 'fidei defensor' (defender of the faith).

Henry and the pope would communicate regularly, by letter or in sending representatives to visit one another, and while there is evidence to suggest Henry felt somewhat oppressed by Rome's constant presence in English religious matters, it wasn't until 1527, when Pope Clement VII was in charge and when Henry first sought a divorce, that the relationship became seriously strained.

> "Henry began to believe that his sonless marriage was a punishment from God for marrying his dead brother's wife"

as it was known at the time – did not come about because of a lack of coinage. Many would argue that the real driving force behind the split was love.

Catherine of Aragon – Henry VIII's cursed first wife – was originally married to Henry's elder brother, Arthur. But after Arthur died of the sweating sickness in 1502, it was decided – apparently in a bid to avoid the repayment of her dowry – that she would marry Henry. Somewhat ironically, this union depended on the pope granting a special dispensation, because canon law forbade men to marry their brother's widow, but Catherine testified that her marriage to Arthur was never consummated, and therefore in the eyes of the church was invalid. The marriage between Henry and Catherine took place in June 1509, seven years after Prince Arthur's death and just days after Henry VIII had acceded to the throne.

But by 1527, the couple had been married for 18 years and had only one surviving child to show for it: Mary. Five other children – three of them boys – had been born, each surviving only a matter of days. The gaps between each birth, often just over a year, show how desperately a son and heir was wanted, particularly as Henry had been involved in a riding accident that nearly killed him. He needed to secure a successor, and as no queens had been allowed up to this point in history, a daughter simply would not do. But at the age of 40, Catherine was past childbearing age.

Henry began to believe that his sonless marriage was a punishment from God for marrying his dead brother's wife. According to the Book of Leviticus, "If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: they shall be childless." While not technically childless, his only surviving daughter was of no interest to Henry.

By this point, Henry was already infatuated with Anne Boleyn, Catherine's maid of honour, but his advances had been refused, with the 19-year-old telling the great king she would only surrender her virginity to the man she married. Henry – a man used to getting his way – was of course stunned, but such was his obsession with her that he consulted his advisers about the possibility of a divorce from Catherine. With Anne as his wife, he reasoned, he would appease God and secure an heir to the Tudor dynasty – and of course fulfil his personal desires.

Divorce was virtually unheard of during this period, so Henry sent Cardinal Thomas Wolsey – his chief adviser – to speak to Pope Clement VII to secure an annulment of the marriage on the grounds that it was against the laws of the church, and that the pope shouldn't have issued a dispensation for the union in the first place. But the dynamics of the meeting were complicated: the pope was, at the time, a prisoner of Charles V, Catherine of Aragon's nephew, and Wolsey was keen to avoid undue tension as he had designs on becoming pope himself one day. Pope Clement VII, not wishing to offend either monarch, played for time by sending a representative back to England to hold a trial to examine the evidence and find a solution. He hoped that during the delay the situation would change, that Henry might change his mind, or that Catherine might become pregnant, or even die.

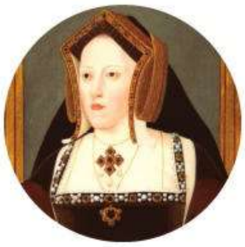
The trial took two years, during which time Henry became ever more frustrated. He asked Catherine to co-operate, offering her a pick of houses to retire to until the matter was resolved and encouraging her to choose to move to a convent, which would leave him free to remarry. But even after Henry separated Catherine from

> After marrying Anne Boleyn in secret, Henry needed to move quickly to guarantee the legitimacy of their unborn child

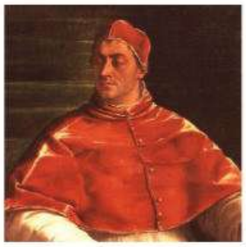
Timeline

1527

Henry wants a divorce
Henry becomes obsessed with a passage in Leviticus that suggests the reason he does not have a son is because he had married his brother's wife. He decides that he has to divorce Catherine.
Spring 1527



Rome is involved
An ecclesiastical court meets several times to discuss the validity of Henry's marriage, but they're unable to reach any clear conclusion and refer the case to Rome. Pope Clement VII hesitates over a final decision.
May 1527



The Pope makes his stance clear
The pope issues a brief that says Henry is not free to remarry and that if he did so without the permission of Rome, any children would be considered illegitimate.
January 1531

Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates
In a bid to put further pressure on the pope to grant his divorce, Henry personally oversees the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, which severely limits the amount of money English churches send to Rome.
March 1532

Mary, her only child, she made it quite clear that she would resist any divorce.

Poor Catherine could never have known that her refusal to accept the annulment and her appeal to Rome for the pope's support would lead to England breaking with her beloved church, and in the days before she died in 1536, she was consumed with worry that she was to blame for the 'heresies' and 'scandals' that England subsequently suffered from.

The trial eventually ended without an annulment. Henry was furious, blamed Wolsey for failing to get the result he wanted, and summoned him to London to answer charges of treason. Wolsey died en route, before he had the chance to face the king's wrath.

Thomas Cromwell, lawyer and First Earl of Essex, was quick to take Wolsey's place. Arguably one of the strongest and most powerful advocates of Reformation, it was Cromwell who masterminded the events that would eventually lead to England's break with Rome, while Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, was the first person to plant the idea of total power in Henry's mind: as king of the country and head of the Church of England, Henry would answer to no one.

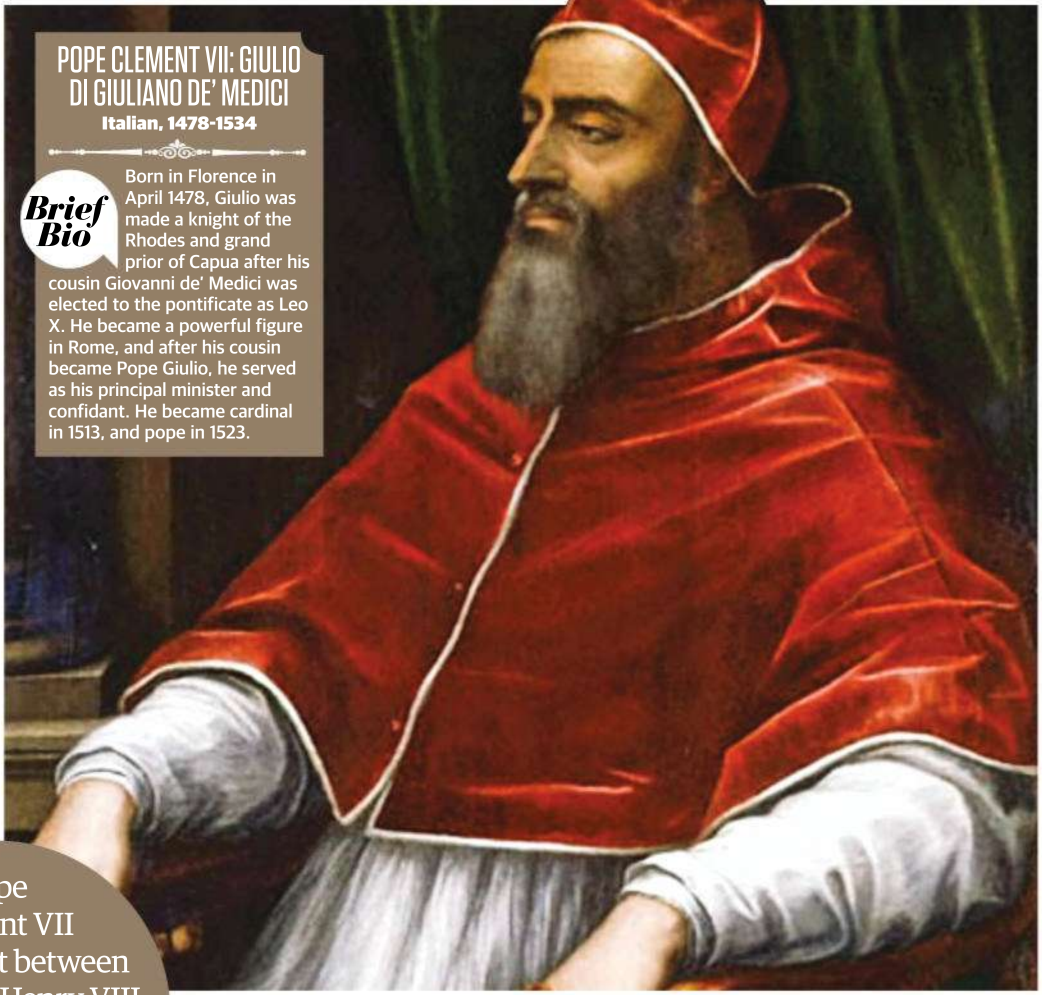
The king sought advice from the universities of Europe. Of course, many within these institutions were opposed to the divorce, so it is no coincidence that the king's advisers were choosy about the scholars they picked to make a decision. It is also no coincidence that those siding with Henry's case were sent a significant sum of money. The careful 'management' of the scholars paid off, and both Cambridge and Oxford University declared it was against divine law for a man to marry his brother's widow. Cranmer then visited the pope to try again for an annulment. But again – and despite the scholars' conclusion – it was refused. In fact, the pope subsequently issued a brief that ordered Henry to separate from Anne, driving home the point that Henry was not free to remarry, and if he did so without the permission of Rome, any children that were born to the couple would be considered illegitimate.

Of course, this did nothing but inflame Henry's already-infamous temper, and in an act of fury, Henry issued the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, which limited payments by any English church to Rome to just 5 per cent of its net revenue. Henry personally oversaw the passing of the bill in the House of Commons, and in an unprecedented move asked all those who supported the bill to sit on one side of the House and those who opposed it on the other – an intimidating measure that saw the act passed without quarrel, and made Henry clearly aware of his opponents.

But again, this failed to have the desired effect on the pope – who had been told repeatedly by Charles V that he would be extremely angry if a divorce was granted. Things were becoming more pressing for Henry now, as by early 1533 Anne revealed that she was pregnant. Henry had to move quickly to ensure the legitimacy of their child, and so the pair wed in a secret ceremony in the king's private chapel in Whitehall.

Sensing opposition to the union – after all, Catherine of Aragon was well liked by the English people – Henry exerted his influence further with

Pope Clement VII was caught between the wills of Henry VIII and Charles V, so he postponed a decision for as long as possible



POPE CLEMENT VII: GIULIO DI GIULIANO DE' MEDICI

Italian, 1478-1534

Brief Bio

Born in Florence in April 1478, Giulio was made a knight of the Rhodes and grand prior of Capua after his cousin Giovanni de' Medici was elected to the pontificate as Leo X. He became a powerful figure in Rome, and after his cousin became Pope Giulio, he served as his principal minister and confidant. He became cardinal in 1513, and pope in 1523.

Act in Restraint of Appeals
This act makes it against the law for anyone to make an appeal of any sort to Rome. Spiritual and secular jurisdiction is to be the ultimate responsibility of the king, and the pope is now made essentially powerless throughout England.
April 1533

Henry gets his divorce
In a hearing at Lambeth Palace, Thomas Cranmer proclaims that Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn – who is now pregnant – is legal. Later, the Act of Succession will ensure that Mary, Henry's daughter from his first marriage, is no longer heir to the throne.
May 1533

1534

The Act of Supremacy
This historical act declares England to be a sovereign state with the king as head of both the country and the church. Henry has more power than ever before, and the subsequent treason act means no one, on pain of death, is allowed to question it.

Cromwell versus Rome

The lawyer played a pivotal role in the break from Rome, but was he a political mastermind or a royal puppet?

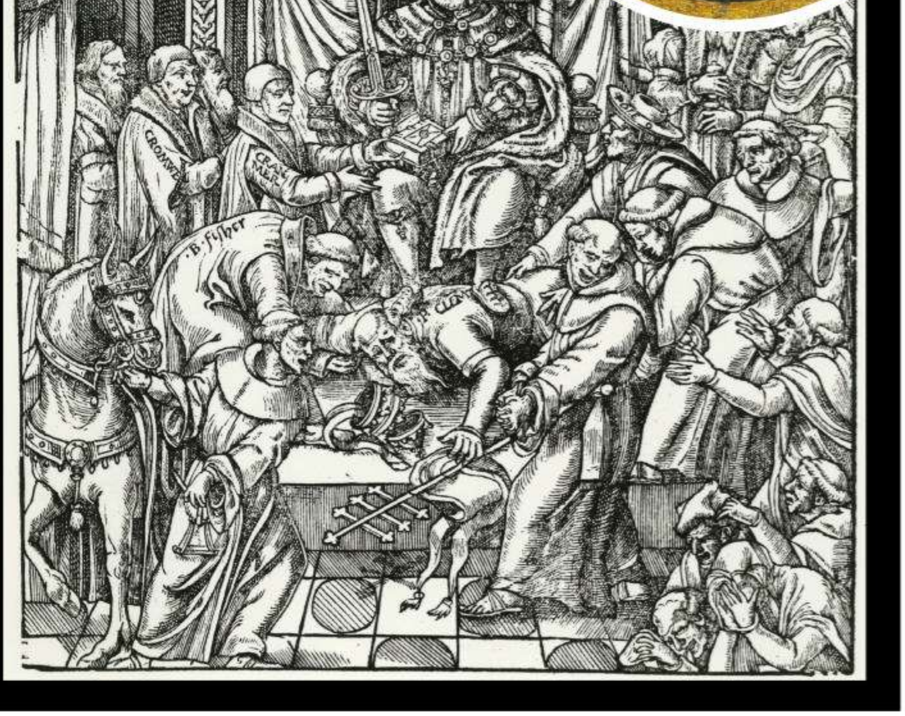
Thomas Cromwell was a self-made man of humble beginnings, the son of a blacksmith and cloth merchant, but he quickly became a well-respected lawyer. By 1523, he'd obtained a seat in the House of Commons and by 1531 he had taken control of the king's legal and parliamentary affairs.

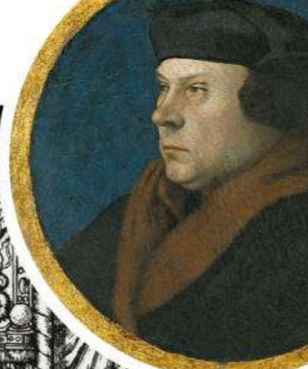
It's not clear whether Cromwell was driven by personal ambition or a deeply rooted belief in his cause – although it is known he wasn't fond of flattery – but he was hugely enamoured with the idea of total and ultimate control for his king. He manipulated the Commons by resurrecting anti-clerical grievances expressed in earlier parliamentary sessions, which led to the Commons denouncing clerical abuses and the power of ecclesiastical courts, ultimately describing Henry as "the only head, sovereign lord, protector and defender" of the church.

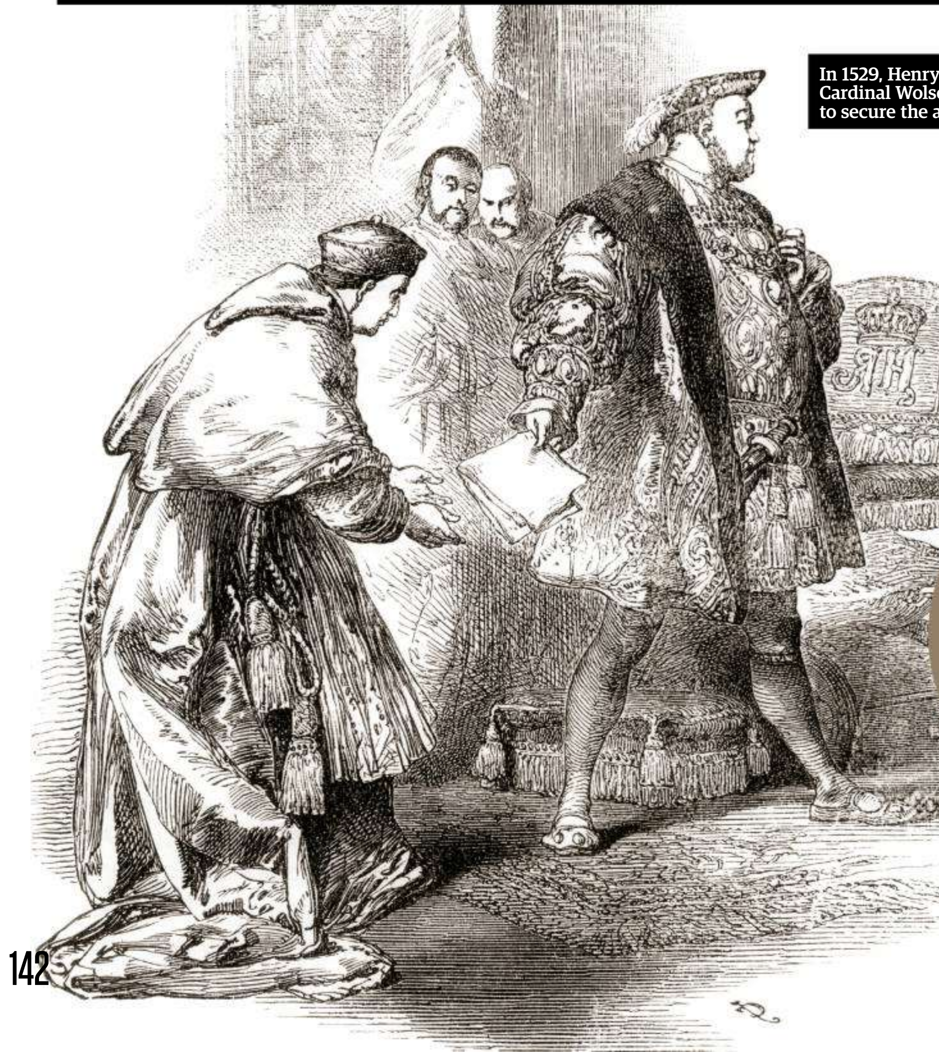
Cromwell went on to oversee the passing of the Act in Restraint of Appeals, and was authorised by Henry – perhaps after some gentle nudging by Cromwell – to discredit the papacy and the pope throughout the nation.

Come 1534, Cromwell had risen to the position of principal secretary and chief minister, and had strengthened his own control over the church, having been appointed Royal Vicegerent and Vicar-General by the king.

There can be little question as to the importance of Cromwell's role in the break from Rome – it was largely thanks to his intellect and persuasiveness that legislative events unfolded the way they did. Whether it was he or Henry ultimately holding the reins, however, is unclear. Certainly, he was a trusted and well-rewarded servant of the king, but that wasn't enough to save him in 1540, when the King's marriage to Anne of Cleves – engineered by Cromwell – went awry, and he was arrested on various questionable counts of treason, and executed.







In 1529, Henry VII dismissed Cardinal Wolsey after he failed to secure the annulment

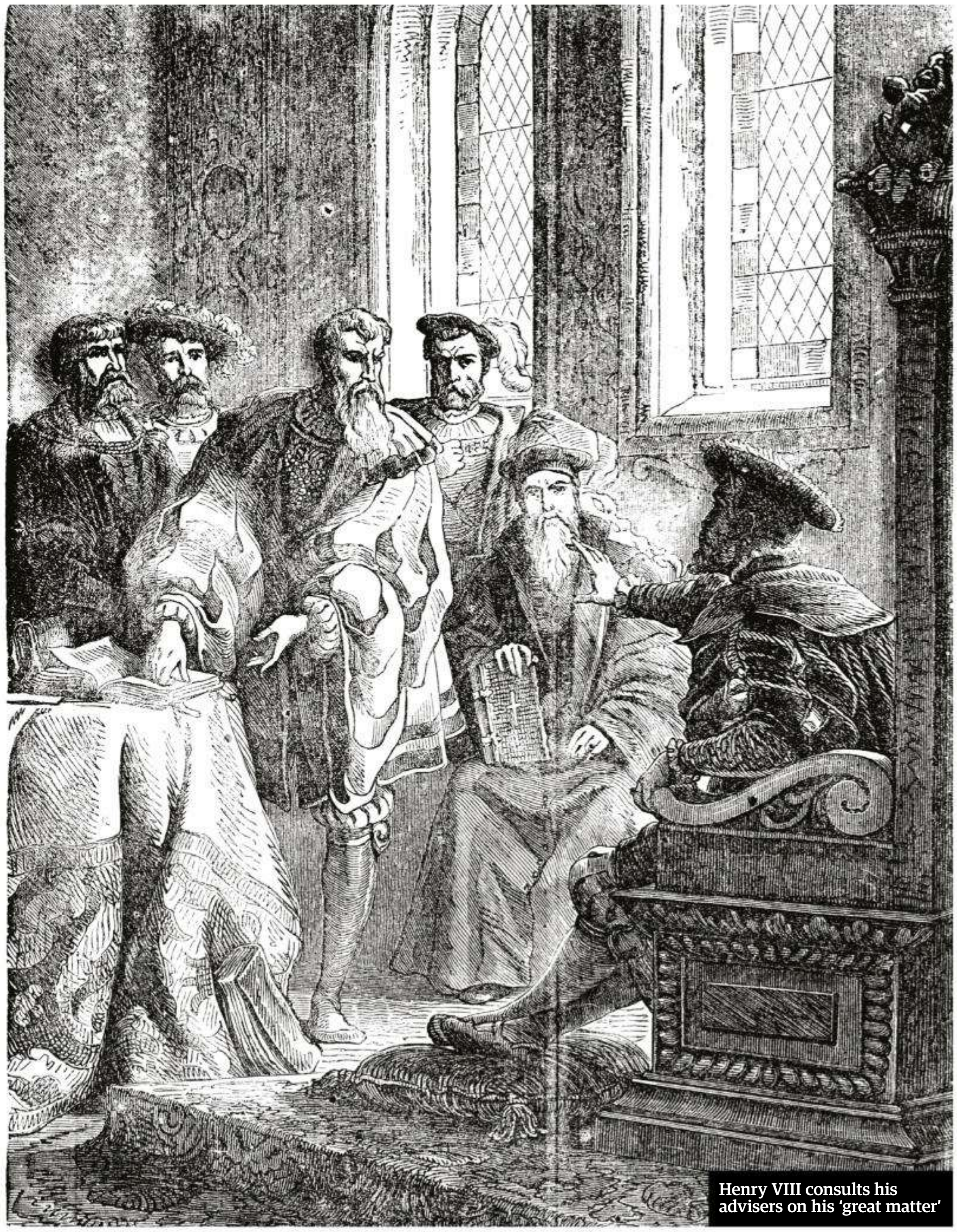
the Act in Restraint of Appeals. This brought church courts under the control of Henry, and made it illegal for anyone to appeal to the pope. This meant that, as the newly appointed archbishop of Canterbury and under Henry's ruling, Thomas Cranmer could grant the much-needed divorce, and nobody could appeal to a higher power – Rome – in protest.

Historians debate whether Henry ever intended things to go this far; after all, if a divorce had been granted from the outset, there would be no need for these laws. But by now Henry had committed to a course of action, and the legacy of the Tudor name depended on him seeing it through.

Unfortunately for Henry, though, Anne gave birth to a girl: Elizabeth. This was both disappointing and embarrassing: Henry had all but moved heaven and earth to protect the status of his unborn child, but another girl meant that the Tudor legacy was no closer to protection. His relationship with Anne suffered, and once again Henry became transfixed on the idea that he was being punished by God.

Still, he was perhaps hopeful that he would get his much-wanted son and heir, and so Henry pushed on. In December 1533, an order was

The break with Rome set a dangerous precedent for the governance of religion in England in the future



Henry VIII consults his advisers on his 'great matter'

"Anyone who wrote or spoke any criticism of Henry in his dealings with the pope was guilty of treason"

issued that said the pope had no more authority in England than any other bishop; from now on he'd simply be known as the Bishop of Rome. To be sure that his subjects recognised royal supremacy over papal supremacy, Henry ordered parish priests to erase all references to the pope from prayer books and to leave their parishioners in no doubt that the king, and only the king, was head of the church.

This was fortified by the Act of Succession, which declared Henry and Catherine's marriage illegal and supported Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. The act also restricted the succession to the children of this new marriage: Princess Mary Tudor was no longer heir to the throne.

The Act of Supremacy - the death knell for England's religious relationship with Rome - was passed in 1534. This effectively declared England a sovereign state and the king head of both country and church. The act gave Henry the power to visit, redress, reform, correct and amend all errors and perceived heresies previously dealt with by another spiritual authority - the pope.

After dissolution, the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey were stripped of lead and stones

Dissolved monasteries

Glastonbury Abbey

One of the worst hit monasteries during the dissolution, in September 1539 Glastonbury Abbey was stripped of its valuables, including a large amount of silver and gold. Abbot Richard Whiting, who'd supported Henry's Act of Supremacy but resisted the dissolution, was hanged, drawn and quartered as a traitor on Glastonbury Tor.

St John's Abbey, Colchester

Thanks to the intervention of Thomas Audley, lord chancellor at the time, St John's Abbey had survived initial dissolutions. But after being raided for valuables, it was dissolved in 1539. The Abbey's last abbot, John Beche, refused to surrender the abbey to the king and was eventually found guilty of treason. He was then hanged.

Leicester Abbey

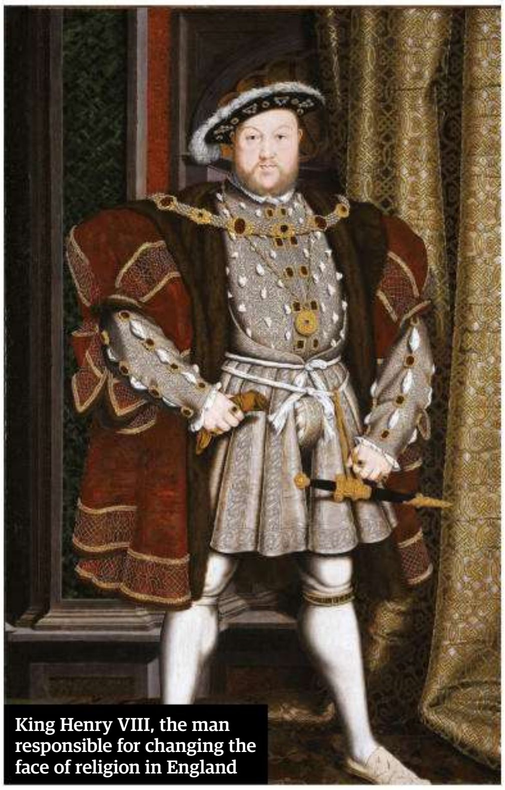
The abbot of Leicester Abbey, John Bourchier, tried to protect his canons and abbey by sending Thomas Cromwell – the man overseeing the inspection of monasteries – lavish gifts, including £100, sheep and oxen. Unfortunately, his bribery didn't work, and the abbey was surrendered in 1538.

Reading Abbey

Reading Abbey was all but destroyed during the dissolution, with valuables taken from the building. After the last abbot, Hugh Cook Faringdon, was hanged, drawn and quartered for treason, the buildings of the abbey were extensively looted, with lead and glass stolen for use elsewhere.

Syon Abbey

After one of its monks, Richard Reynolds, went to great lengths to deny Henry's supremacy over the English Church, Syon Abbey became the focus of particular vengeance for Henry. After the monastery finally surrendered to the king in 1539, the abbey was dissolved, and Richard Reynolds was hanged, drawn and quartered for treason.



King Henry VIII, the man responsible for changing the face of religion in England

The Reformation Parliament

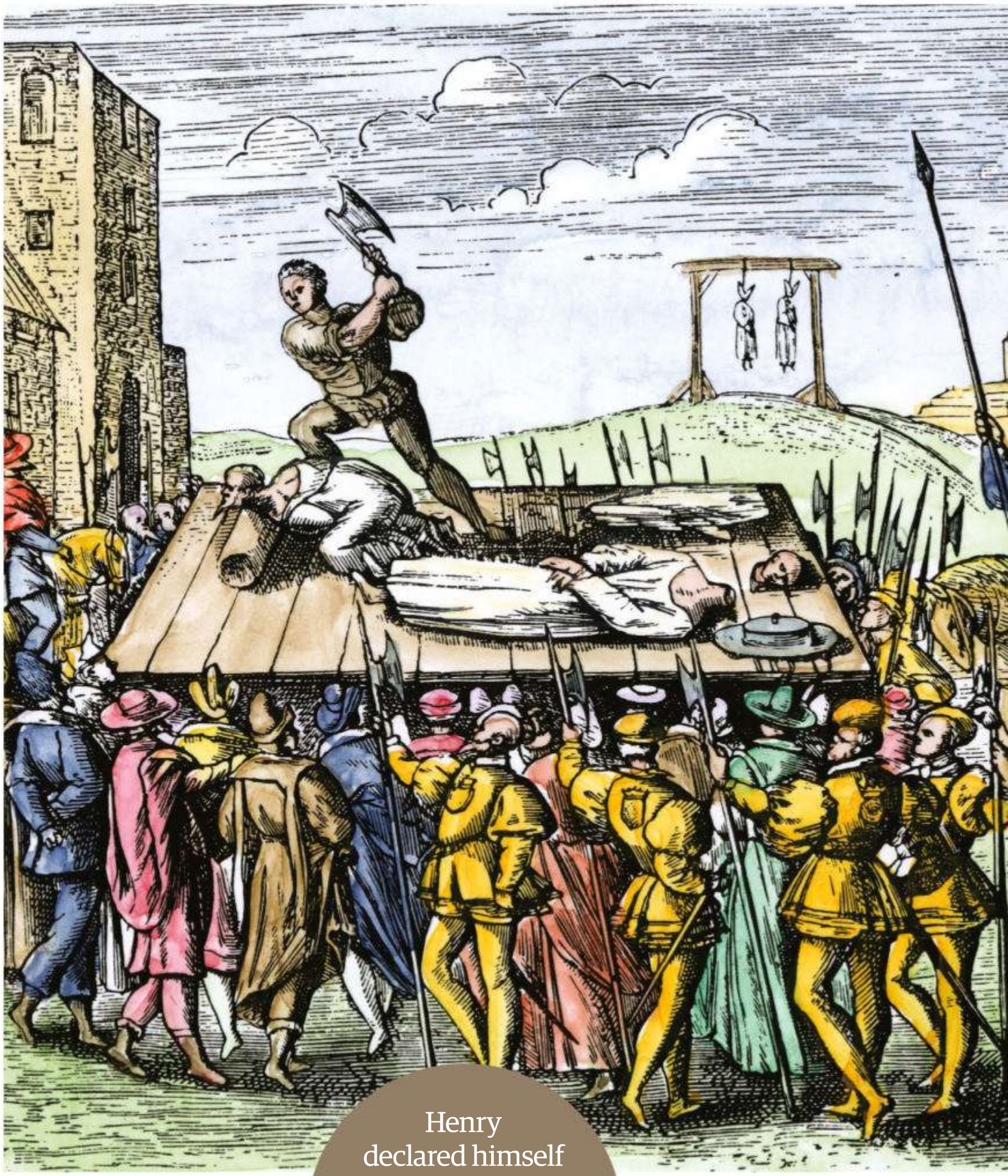
The Reformation Parliament was so called because it was the English parliament that passed and enabled all the major pieces of legislation that led to the English reformation under Henry VIII.

This Parliament sat from 1529 to 1536 and was tasked with dealing with Henry's divorce from Catherine: his 'great matter'. But in a few short years Parliament made laws affecting all aspects of national life, and with the ground-breaking statutes of the 1530s, the Reformation Parliament became all powerful. No area of governance was outside its authority – apart from Henry's will, that was.

Parliament existed simply because Henry decided it could, but the king knew that the best way to exercise his will was with the backing of Parliament in statute. As he himself told the Commons: "We be informed by our judges that we at no time stand so highly in our estate royal as in the time of Parliament."

Parliament was integral to Henry's break with Rome, not only because it helped to pass important legislation, but because it was pivotal in identifying areas of criticism, such as the greed and vices of the church, which helped convince many that the split was needed.

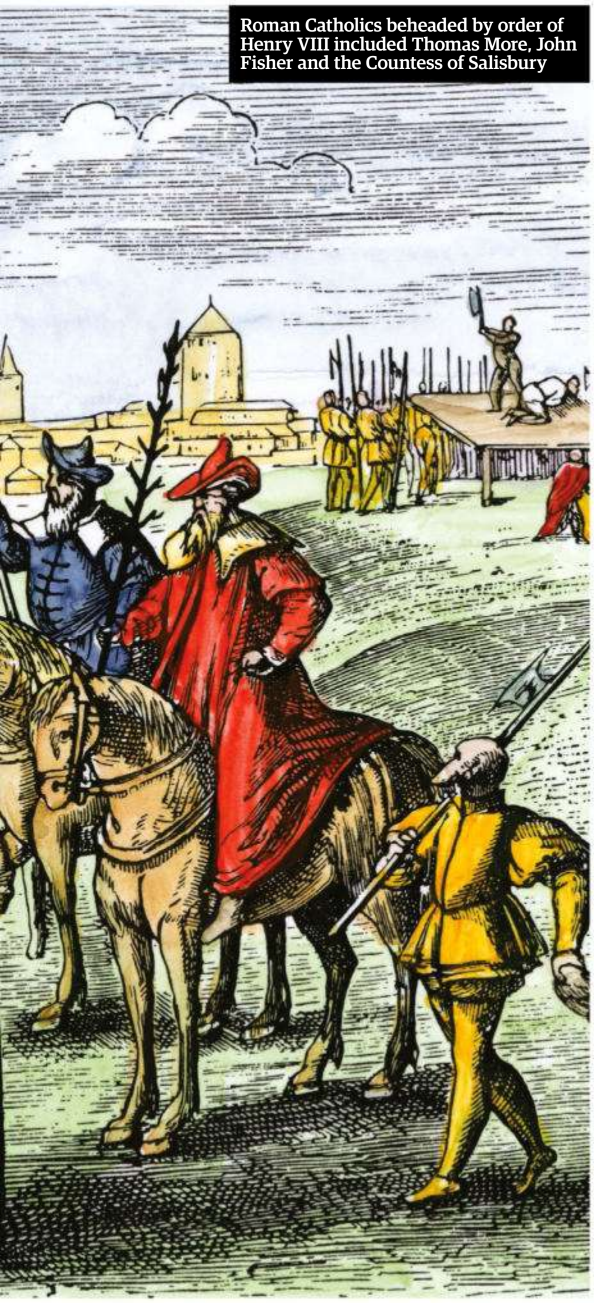
Henry was no doubt somewhat manipulative of Parliament in order to achieve his aims, but his successors each equally used parliament to pass their own legislation, changing the landscape of both politics and religion in England forever.



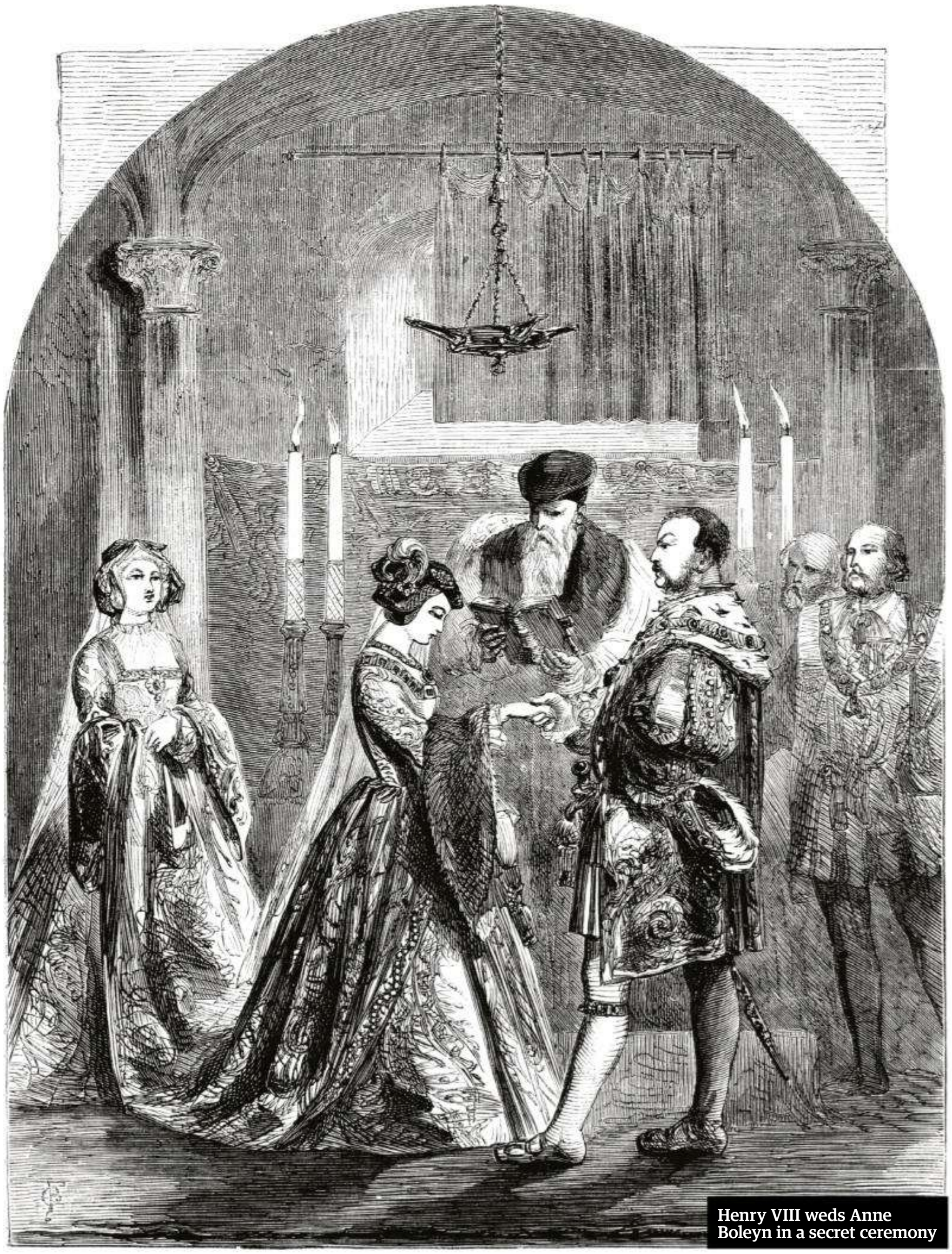
Henry declared himself the head of the church, and threatened his opponents with death

All taxes that were formerly paid to Rome would now only be paid to the king, who could now define the faith in parliament and appoint any men he wanted to the most important ecclesiastical posts. The passing of this act gave Henry more power than ever, and a Treason Act swiftly followed, which said that anyone who wrote or spoke any criticism of Henry in his dealings with the pope was guilty of treason and would be dealt with severely. Conveniently, Charles V was occupied elsewhere fighting the French, and was unable to intervene.

Of course, Henry couldn't simply have all of his naysayers killed, so he had to make the move from Rome look like an overall package of reform. Indeed, the entire process had happened so slowly that most common people had little issue with the change – King Henry had always been seen as top dog anyway. However, most did take umbrage with the idea of divorce and the way that Catherine and Mary had been treated. But this was balanced against the popular opinion of the church, which had been seen as excessively wealthy and greedy, and the pope a foreigner only interested in raising taxes. So at this stage, the majority sided with Henry, and willingly took the Oath of Supremacy that he subsequently demanded of all of his subjects. Those that didn't – a great number of monks, for example – were arrested and publicly hanged, drawn and quartered, which evidently served to 'encourage' support from his opponents.



Roman Catholics beheaded by order of Henry VIII included Thomas More, John Fisher and the Countess of Salisbury



Henry VIII weds Anne Boleyn in a secret ceremony

At this point, despite the enormous changes to the governance of the church, religion itself in England remained unchanged. However, the developments created a dangerous precedent for England going forward. By 1536, Henry had lost interest in Anne – who had failed to provide him with a son – and who was subsequently charged with treason and adultery, and executed.

Henry then married Jane Seymour, and thanks to the Act of Succession was able to effectively 'strike from the record' his previous marriages, giving Elizabeth the same status as Mary: 'lady', not 'princess'. But the general public had greater concerns. In a bid to boost the king's coffers, Cromwell led the dissolution of the monasteries, which saw monastic land sold off and the buildings stripped bare of anything of value, including the lead off the roofs. The Act of 10 Articles in 1536 made the English church more Protestant, with just three sacraments recognised – baptism, penance and the Eucharist. Other sacraments, including marriage and the last rites, were no longer regarded as holy, and pilgrimages and the display of relics were also banned. But later, in 1539, the Act of Six Articles undid much of this Protestant focus and reintroduced many Catholic beliefs.

It was a tumultuous time for religion in England, with the church-going masses pulled from pillar to post in keeping abreast of the changes – failure to comply carried harsh penalties, after all. This evolution of religion carried on long after Henry's death, too, as Mary and Elizabeth later jostled for power, each with their own religious beliefs that they wanted to instil across the land.

Henry's motives for breaking with Rome were, initially at least, far removed from religion, but the Great King, and his temper, impatience and lusty ways, set in motion a process that would change the face of religion – and indeed politics – in England forever.

> "The entire process had happened so slowly that most common people had little issue with the change"

© Alamy

> "The risks were high, but the profits, if successful, were even greater"

The Tudor empire

In the age of exploration, the fate of nations and the fortunes of men were created, sunk and stolen on the open seas

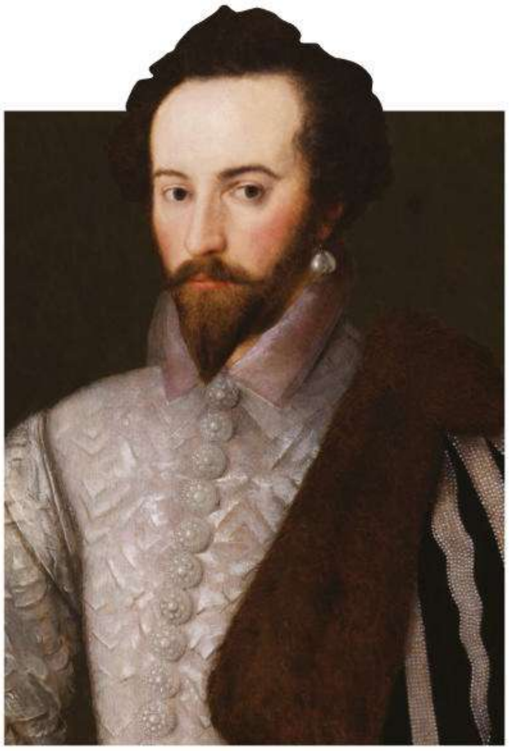
In the years before Elizabeth ascended the throne, England was plagued by internal conflicts. Her father Henry VIII's split from the church had caused England to fall out of favour with Rome, and then the early death of his heir Edward VI prompted a succession crisis. The country had switched from Protestant to Catholic with the rise of Mary I, and those who dared to challenge her were burned in the streets without mercy. While other countries were prospering, England was struggling to maintain order within its own borders. What the country needed was a stable, temperate ruler, one whose reign would allow the nation to flourish; that is what it found in Elizabeth.

A Protestant, but without the extreme beliefs of her father, Elizabeth was tolerant, moderate and wise enough to listen to her counsellors. Finally, with the country somewhat stable, its population was able to look outwards. They discovered that the world had very much moved on without them. Spanish, Italian and Portuguese explorers ruled the waves. Using their sophisticated navigation tools, they had set up powerful and profitable trading roots, and if it didn't act soon, England would find itself isolated and vulnerable.

Armed with new navigation tools, English sailors were finally bold enough to sail beyond the sight of land and into the open sea. The spirit of exploration gripped the nation, which was eager to best the competition, spread Christianity and, most importantly, claim riches. Figures such as Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake, a virtual unknown, became household names after completing valiant voyages. As riches began to pour in, more and more ambitious seamen took to the waves eager for a taste of glory, wealth and adventure. The risks were high, but the profits, if successful, were even greater.

It became obvious that true wealth lay in trade and an abundance of chartered companies began to pop up around the country. Making perilous journeys to plant their flags in far-off exotic lands, traders brought a stream of valuable eastern spices, pepper, nutmeg, wine, precious stones, dyes and even slaves pouring into England.

It was an era of exploration, an era of change; a time when a lowly sailor with an adventurous spirit could make his fortune if he was daring enough to take it. There was a new world to explore, and it seemed like the entire world order could change as quickly as the wind.



The pirate knight

Writer, courtier, spy, Walter Raleigh used his favour with the queen to wipe out his Spanish rivals

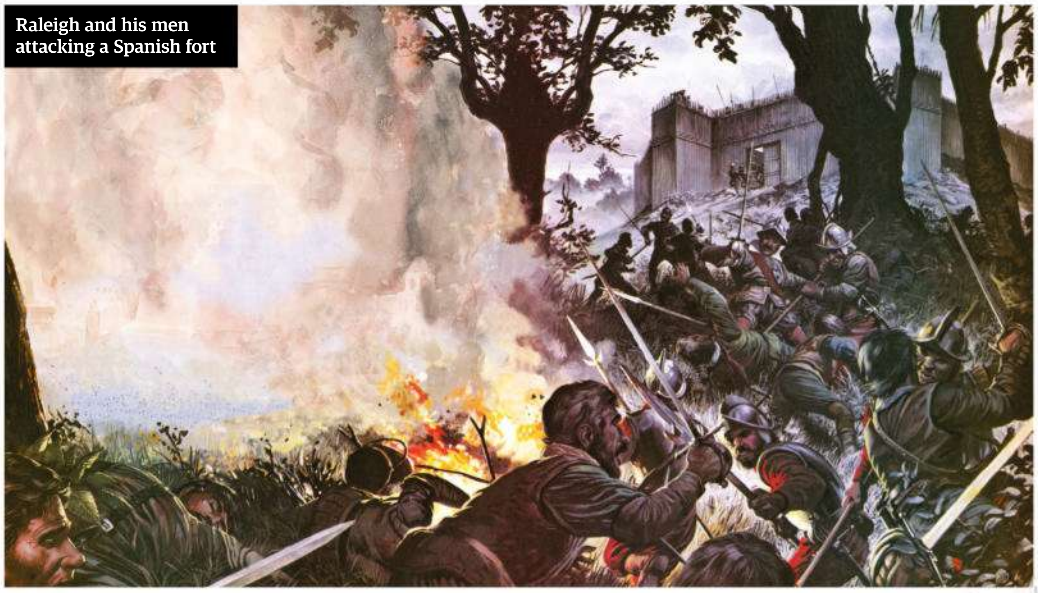
The life story of Sir Walter Raleigh is one of glittering highs and devastating lows. It perfectly encapsulates how, in the age of exploration, one's fate could be changed, for better or worse, in an instant.

Born into moderate influence, Raleigh was the youngest son of a highly Protestant family.

Educated at Oxford University, it seemed he was set for an academic life, but when the French religious civil wars broke out, he left the country to serve with the Huguenots against King Charles IX of France. However, it was his participation in the Desmond Rebellions in Ireland that would forever alter his life. When uprisings broke out in Munster, Raleigh fought in the queen's army to suppress the rebels. His ruthlessness in punishing the rebels at the Siege of Smerwick in 1580 and his subsequent seizure of lands saw him become a powerful landowner and, most importantly, it caught the attention of the queen.

Oozing natural charm and wit, Raleigh became a frequent visitor to the Royal Court and he soon became a firm favourite of Elizabeth. She bestowed her beloved courtier with large estates and even a knighthood. Her deep trust in Raleigh was demonstrated in 1587, when she made him Captain of the Queen's Guard.

It is no surprise then that when Raleigh suggested colonising America, it was supported whole heartedly by the queen, who granted him trade privileges to do just that. From 1584 to 1589, Raleigh led several voyages to the New World; he explored from North Carolina to Florida and bestowed it with the name 'Virginia' in honour of the virgin queen. His attempts to establish colonies, however, ended in failure. His settlement at Roanoke Island especially was a disaster, as the entire colony mysteriously disappeared, their fate unknown to this day. The Roanoke colony was



Raleigh and his men attacking a Spanish fort

Ship's log

Tudor ships explored the world, but the journey was anything but luxurious

7 February 1595

Rats have infested the ship, making the deck even more uncomfortable and cramped to sleep on. After the vicious winds last night, the sails have been repaired and the water pumped out of the ship. Luckily my backgammon set was not harmed.

15 March 1595

Supplies running low. Hardtack biscuits are completely riddled with maggots and worms but, with nothing else, there is no choice but to eat them. Water no longer suitable to drink, so must survive on beer alone.

18 April 1595

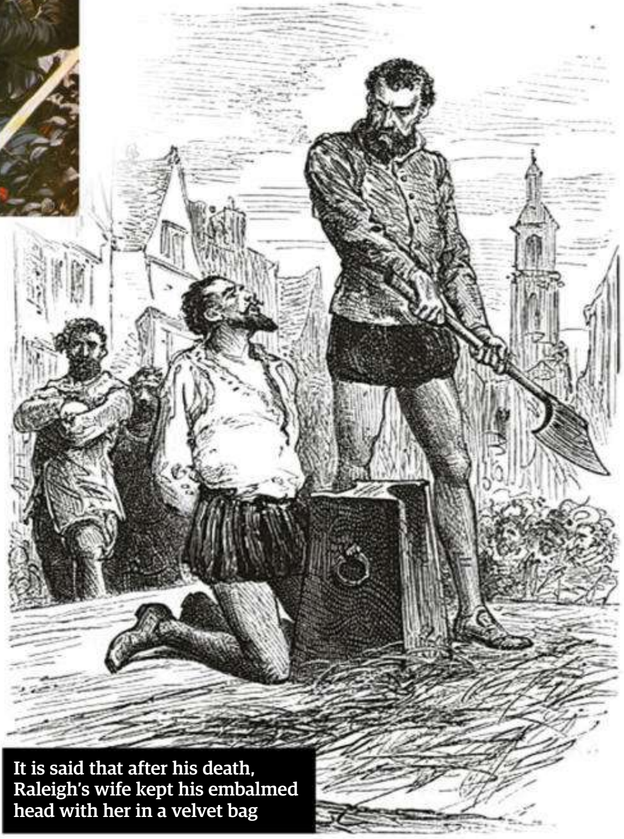
Many of the men have fallen victim to scurvy. The doctor is unable to do much to ease their symptoms. Their teeth are falling out and sores have broken out all over their bodies. Some cases became so severe that several men have died. We threw the corpses overboard.

2 June 1595

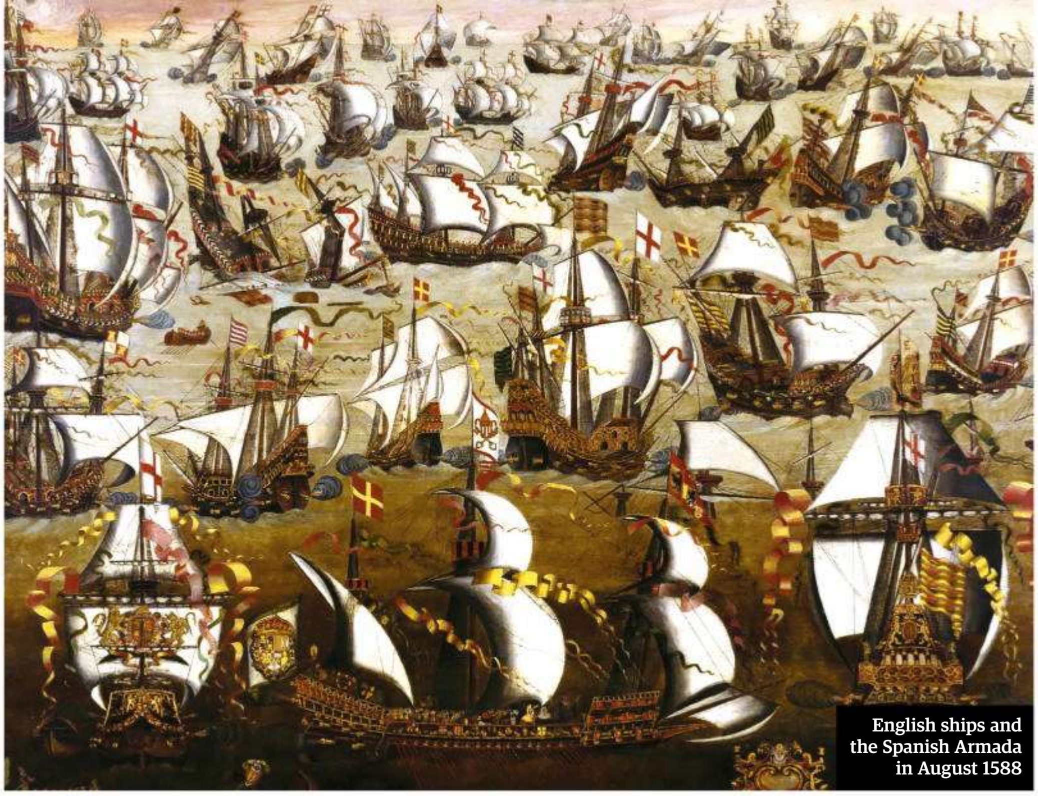
The men are getting restless and rebellious. One had to be flogged after speaking back to an officer. Another was keelhauled - tied to a line looped around the ship, thrown overboard and dragged under the vessel. The barnacles cut him up so terribly that he lost an arm.

29 June 1595

Saw some driftwood today, and another officer informed me he saw a seabird. We may be close to land. This completely contradicts the map we were given (again), so new instructions will need to be drawn up if land is spotted.



It is said that after his death, Raleigh's wife kept his embalmed head with her in a velvet bag



English ships and the Spanish Armada in August 1588

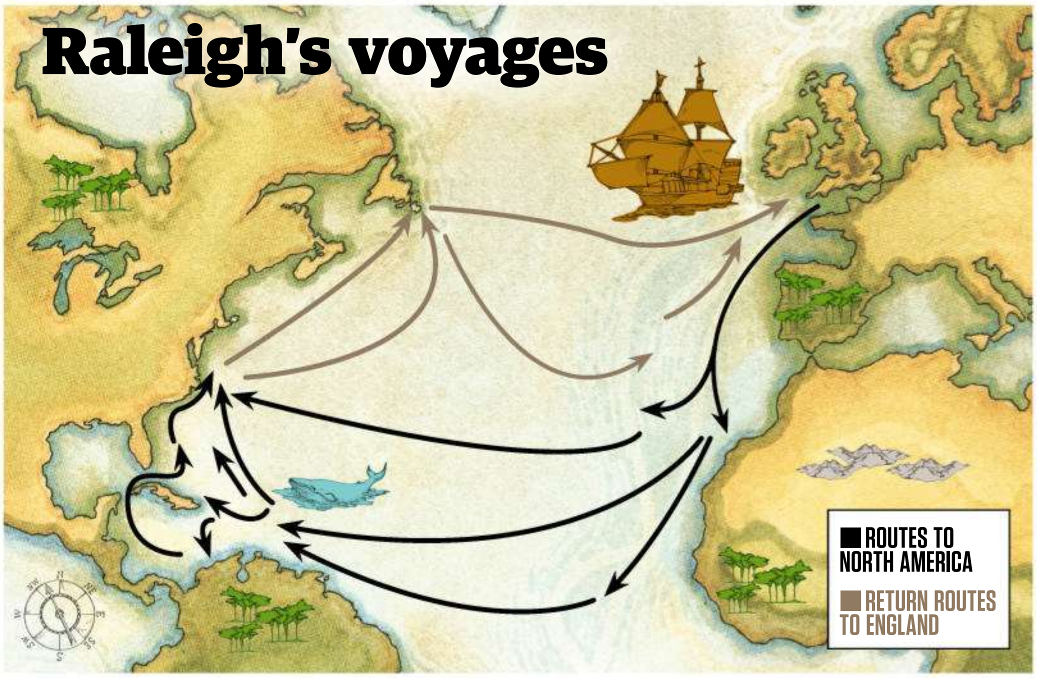
not the only one to experience a disastrous end – Raleigh's relationship with the queen was destroyed when she discovered his secret marriage to one of her own ladies in waiting. Not only was she 11 years younger than him, but she was also pregnant. Furious that he had failed to obtain her permission, and likely more than a little jealous and betrayed, Elizabeth had Raleigh imprisoned and his wife cast out of court.

Upon his release, Raleigh was eager to reclaim favour with the monarch so led a mission to search for the legendary city of gold – El Dorado. Although his accounts would claim otherwise, he did not find the city of legend, but instead explored modern-day Guyana and Venezuela. His attack on the powerful Spanish Port of Cadiz and attempts to destroy the newly formed Spanish Armada helped to gradually win back favour with Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth died and James I came to the throne in 1603, Raleigh must have realised his time was up. His ruthless spirit and charm had won him a soft spot in the English queen's heart, but the Scottish king took an immediate dislike to him. Raleigh was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London less than a year after James's ascension. He was found guilty of treason, but was spared from his death sentence and committed to life imprisonment. In 1616 he was released by the money-hungry king to, yet again, search for the fabled city of gold, which his own accounts had helped make into a legend.

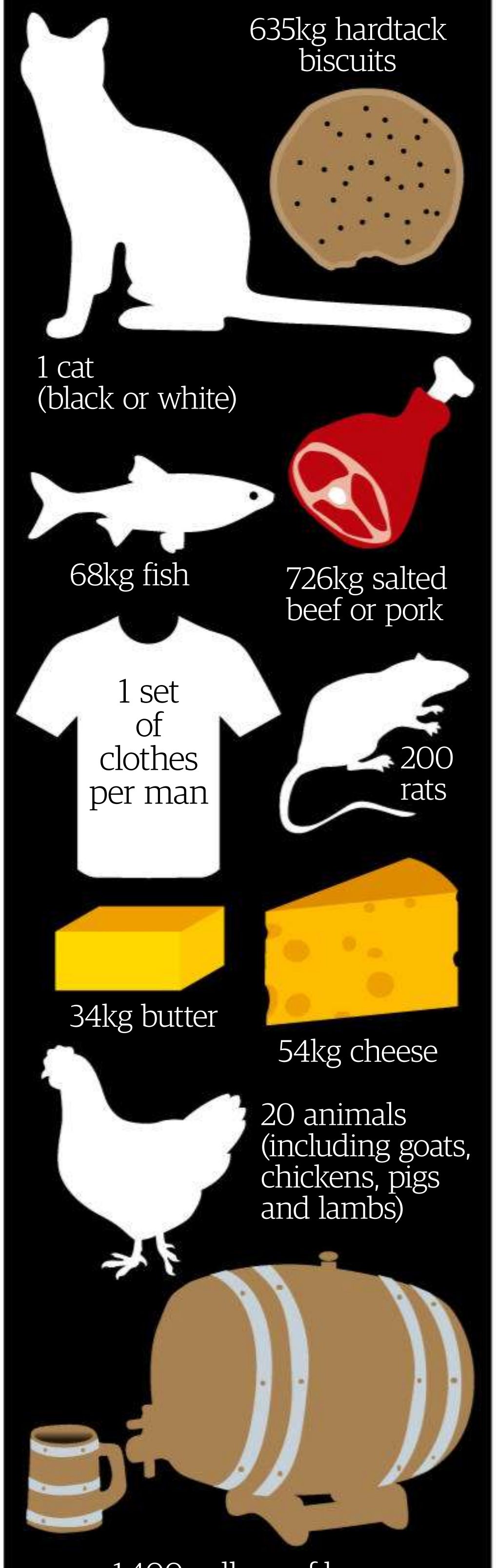
During the expedition, he disobeyed James's orders and attacked a Spanish outpost. Spain was furious, and in order to appease them, James had no choice but to punish the rebellious adventurer. Raleigh was re-arrested and his sentence was finally carried out. Bold and cunning to the end, Raleigh reportedly said to his executioner: "This is sharp medicine, but it is a cure for all diseases. What dost thou fear? Strike, man, strike."

Raleigh's voyages



What was on board?

A ship of 200 men setting sail for a week would be loaded with…



635kg hardtack biscuits

1 cat (black or white)

68kg fish

726kg salted beef or pork

1 set of clothes per man

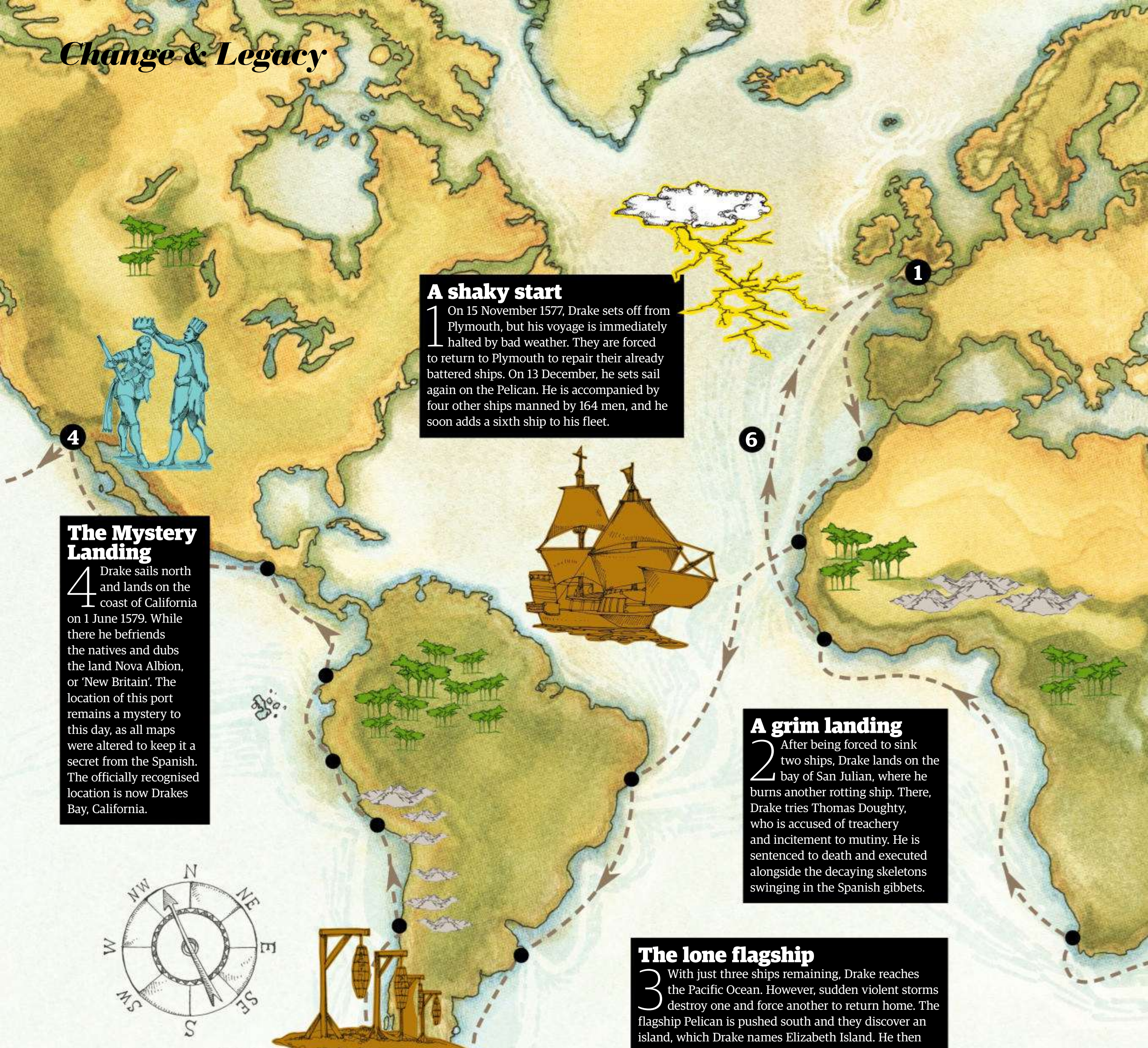
200 rats

34kg butter

54kg cheese

20 animals (including goats, chickens, pigs and lambs)

1,400 gallons of beer



A shaky start

1 On 15 November 1577, Drake sets off from Plymouth, but his voyage is immediately halted by bad weather. They are forced to return to Plymouth to repair their already battered ships. On 13 December, he sets sail again on the Pelican. He is accompanied by four other ships manned by 164 men, and he soon adds a sixth ship to his fleet.

The Mystery Landing

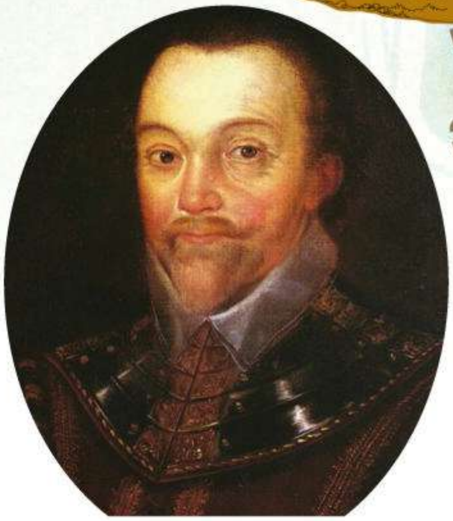
4 Drake sails north and lands on the coast of California on 1 June 1579. While there he befriends the natives and dubs the land Nova Albion, or 'New Britain'. The location of this port remains a mystery to this day, as all maps were altered to keep it a secret from the Spanish. The officially recognised location is now Drakes Bay, California.

A grim landing

2 After being forced to sink two ships, Drake lands on the bay of San Julian, where he burns another rotting ship. There, Drake tries Thomas Doughty, who is accused of treachery and incitement to mutiny. He is sentenced to death and executed alongside the decaying skeletons swinging in the Spanish gibbets.

The lone flagship

3 With just three ships remaining, Drake reaches the Pacific Ocean. However, sudden violent storms destroy one and force another to return home. The flagship Pelican is pushed south and they discover an island, which Drake names Elizabeth Island. He then changes the name of his lone ship to the Golden Hind.



For many, Sir Francis Drake is a physical embodiment of the glories of Tudor England. But Drake himself was an entirely untypical hero. His birth was viewed so unremarkable that no one is sure exactly when it was. He came from a very ordinary family; he was the eldest of 12 sons, and his father was a farmer. When the Catholic Mary began to persecute Protestants, the family fled from Devonshire to Kent, where his father became a preacher. It seemed fate itself wished to place Drake on a ship, as he was apprenticed to their neighbour, and when the old, childless sailor died, he left his ship to his favourite pupil.

By the 1560s, the young Drake was making frequent trips to Africa. There, he would capture slaves and sell them in New Spain. This was against Spanish law and in 1568 his fleet was trapped by Spaniards in the Mexican port of San Juan de Ulua. Although Drake managed to escape, many of his men were killed. This incident instilled a deep hatred in Drake towards the Spanish crown that would last throughout his entire life.

In 1572 he received a privateer's commission from Elizabeth and set his sights on plundering any Spanish ship that crossed his path. He targeted wealthy Spanish-owned port towns and settlements, attacking them and claiming as much gold and silver as he could load on to his ships. It

Dragon of the seas

A world full of riches awaited to make England a wealthy and powerful nation once again

The Hind lives on

5 Drake reaches a group of islands in the southwest Pacific known as the Moluccas. After a close shave in which the Golden Hind is almost lost after being caught on a reef, Drake befriends the sultan king of the islands.

Tudor navigation

Although Tudor sailors liked to paint themselves as masters of the seas, their navigation tools were rather primitive and a lot of guesswork was involved. Maps did exist, but they were often incorrect, as much land was undiscovered. Compasses were used for direction and an instrument called a nocturnal was used to determine the alignment of the stars, which helped to calculate tides. The term 'knots' came from a Tudor method to calculate the speed of a ship – a piece of wood attached to a rope with knots in it was cast out and the knots counted as they passed through a sailor's fingers. Another sailor used a sandglass to determine how many knots were travelled in a period of time.

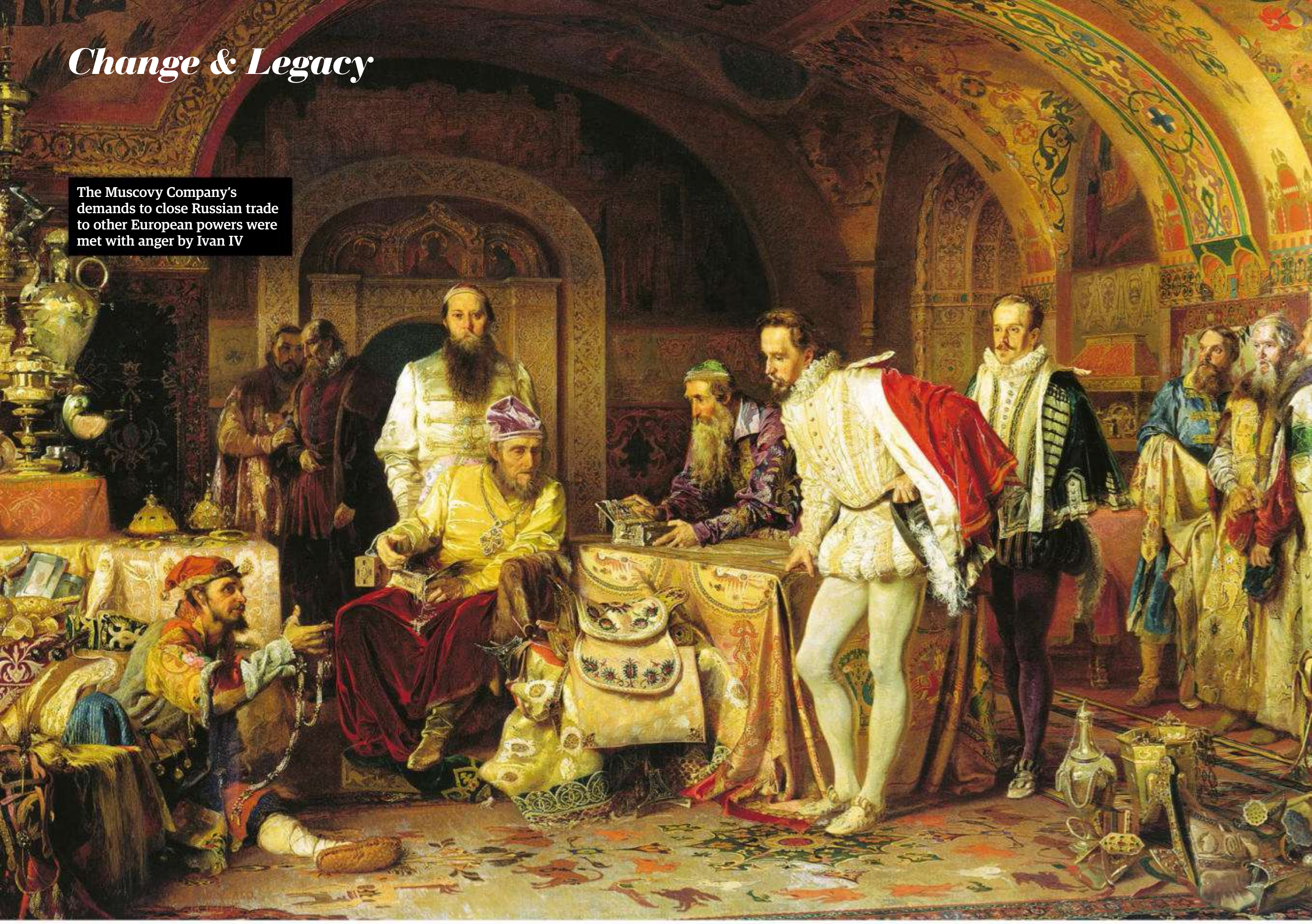
The valiant return

6 On 26 September 1580, the Golden Hind finally returns to Plymouth with Drake and the 59 remaining crewmembers onboard. The queen receives half of the treasures and spices loaded onto the ship. In return, Elizabeth gives Drake a jewel with her miniature portrait, now known as the 'Drake Jewel'.

was Drake who, when discovering that he had too much gold to carry, decided to bury it and reclaim it later. This was not the only comparison made between Drake and pirates. Although in England his success had seen him become a wealthy and respected explorer, this was not the case in Spain. To the Spaniards whose ships he had plundered, Drake became a bloodthirsty figure to be feared; they even gave him the terrifying nickname 'El Draque' – the Dragon.

Dragon or not, the daring and bountiful voyages of the English adventurer had impressed Queen Elizabeth I. He perfectly epitomised the kind of pioneering English spirit that she felt her country needed to ensure it became a major world power. In 1577, she sent Drake on an expedition against the Spanish along the Pacific coast of South America. He raided the Spanish settlements in his usual ruthless style and, after plundering Spanish ships along the coasts of Chile and Peru, he landed in California and claimed it for his queen. His journey continued through the Indian Ocean and when he finally returned to England on 26 September 1580, he became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world. This delighted the queen, but what pleased her even more were the pretty jewels he bestowed her with. In a move that insulted the king of Spain, she dined onboard the explorer's ship, bestowed him with a jewel of her own and gave him a knighthood.

Drake's formidable success at the expense of Spain did not end there. In 1588 he was made vice admiral of the Navy, and when 130 Spanish Armada ships entered the English Channel, he fought them back with relish. Now, he wasn't only a wealthy explorer and royal favourite, he was also a war hero. However, in 1596 his luck finally ran out. The queen requested him to engage his old enemy Spain one last time and in a mission to capture the Spanish treasure in Panama, Drake contracted dysentery and died. His body was placed in a lead coffin and cast out to sea. His enduring legacy remains, and to this day divers continue to search for the coffin of the man who led Elizabethan England to glory.



The Muscovy Company's demands to close Russian trade to other European powers were met with anger by Ivan IV

Treasures of the empire

A world full of riches awaited to make England a wealthy and powerful nation once again

When it came to trade, England had some catching up to do. For a long time, Italian spice and dye traders dominated the seas, but the Italian monopoly that had existed on trade was finally broken by Spain and Portugal. In their efforts to loosen the Italian hold on trade, these traders discovered sea routes to the Indies and the hugely valuable spices that lay beyond. England looked on greedily as Spain grew wealthier and wealthier and became determined to share in the riches that were on offer in the New World. If England failed to get a foothold in the exploration of the New World, its European rivals would leave it behind and the nation would be left vulnerable. Trade didn't just mean riches anymore - it meant survival.

After an English spy gained a copy of Breve Compendio De La Sphera, a secret Spanish textbook that held the secrets to success at sea, craftsmen began designing new instruments and English explorers were finally ready to take to the waves. Queen Elizabeth supported the voyages of these intrepid explorers and expressed that she would not disapprove if they were to take advantage of richly laden Spanish ships while doing so. Soon, English adventurers gained a reputation for piracy, although the raids were conducted not by pirates but by 'privateers'. Spanish ships in the Caribbean trembled in terror upon the sight of an English galleon on the horizon. A new world was dawning, and using their cunning, daring and ruthlessness, English traders would come to rule it.

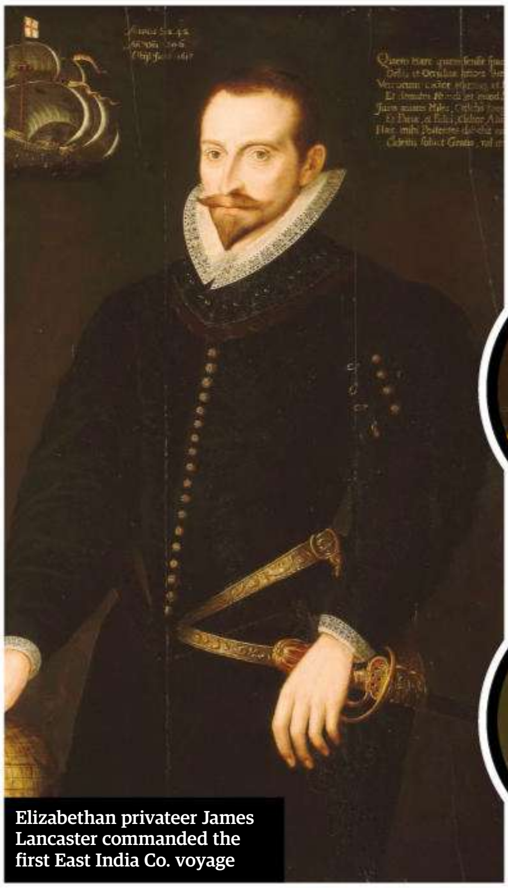
Trade invoice

Slaves - Africa
Oriental spices: cinnamon, cloves, peppers - China and India
Currants: dried wine grapes - Eastern Mediterranean
Wine - Eastern Mediterranean
Cotton - Eastern Mediterranean
Silk - Eastern Mediterranean
Cordage - Russia
Hemp - Russia
Furs - Russia
Carpets - Turkey
Silk - Persia
Fruit - Mediterranean
Sugar - North Africa

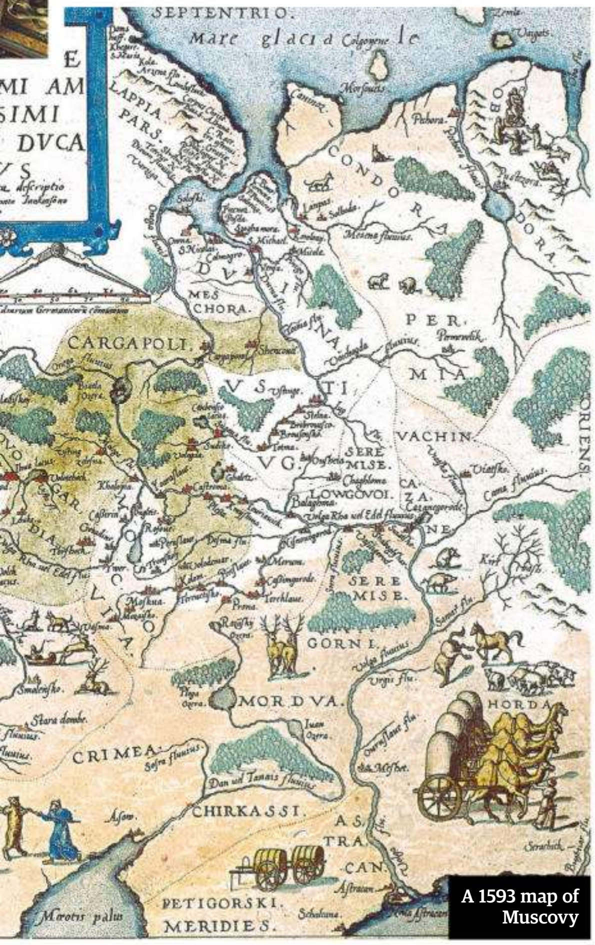
The East India Company

The tiny English company that came to control half of all the world's trade

When Queen Elizabeth granted a Royal Charter to the traders that would become the East India Trading Company, it's doubtful she could foresee the impact it would have upon the world. The 15-year charter permitted the fledgling company a monopoly on trade with countries east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan, but they were motivated by one thing - spices. But the Dutch East India Company had the monopoly and the small English company had to work from the bottom up, slowly gaining income and respect. Eventually the company's trade in spices, cotton and silk saw profits pour in. Just 47 years after its creation, the little business morphed into a giant. For many, the pioneering nature of the company was symbolic of the spirit of exploration, tearing down the barriers of the world. But as the company became more powerful, its ambitions grew in kind. The initial focus on trade morphed into dangerous colonial aspirations that would lead to the company's eventual downfall.



Elizabethan privateer James Lancaster commanded the first East India Co. voyage



A 1593 map of Muscovy

Expanding East

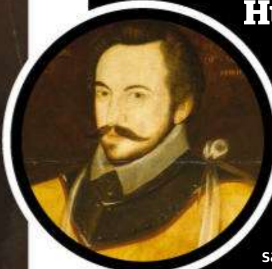
The East India Company weren't the only English traders to rule the seas

Although the East India Trading Company was a major player in the arena of English trade, many other companies were making waves worldwide. The first major chartered joint stock company was the Muscovy Company, focusing on trade between England and Muscovy, modern-day Russia. Trading with this mysterious state in the frozen tundra involved perilous journeys that left one crew frozen, but when Richard Chancellor finally made it to Moscow he found a market eager to trade. English wool was exchanged for Russian fur and an array of valuable goods. The Muscovy Company even led to a marriage proposal from Ivan the Terrible to Elizabeth.

Another major English chartered company was the Levant, or Turkey, Company, drawn to the Ottoman empire by the lure of exotic spices. The Levant Company amassed a small fortune trading in silk and valuable currants. What set the Levant Company apart was that the leaders never appeared to have colonial ambitions, instead working closely with the sultan. This allowed for a relationship of mutual benefit.

Forgotten Tudor explorers

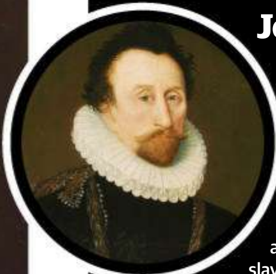
The men whose voyages carved the world for England



Humphrey Gilbert

1539-1583

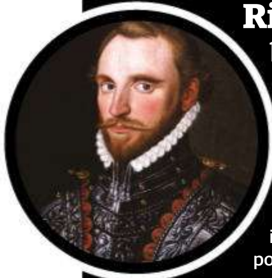
Half brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, Gilbert's voyages established St John's Newfoundland, the most eastern province of Canada, in 1583. An early pioneer of the English colonial empire in North America, Gilbert initially sailed to find a sea route through North America to Asia.



John Hawkins

1532-1595

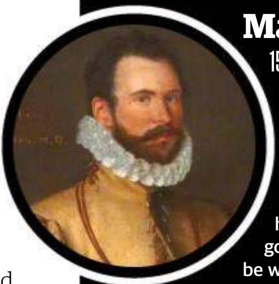
A cousin of Francis Drake, Hawkins was not only the chief architect of the Navy but also conducted several voyages to far-flung West Africa and South America. Hawkins was a trade pioneer and made a huge profit from the slave trade.



Richard Grenville

1542-1591

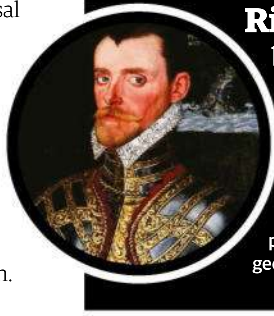
An English war hero, Grenville was a major part of early attempts to settle in the New World. He attempted to set up colonies in Roanoke Island and his daring death aboard his ship Revenge is immortalised in Tennyson's poem *The Revenge*.



Martin Frobisher

1535/1539-1594

Frobisher was determined to find a north-west passage as a trade route to India and China, and made three voyages in an effort to do so. The privateer collected what he believed was 1,550 tons of gold, but actually turned out to be worthless iron pyrite.



Richard Hawkins

1562-1622

Son of John Hawkins, he set sail to prey on the possessions of the Spanish crown in South America. Although his plundering of Spanish towns strongly suggest otherwise, he maintained that the purpose of the expedition was geographical discovery.

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The Renaissance in England

Sparking in the workshops of Florence, Europe's cultural rebirth spread throughout the continent and found its own unique flare in England

In January, 1504, perhaps the greatest work of art mankind had yet produced was about to be unveiled for the first time. The Vestry Board of Florence's Cathedral gathered in eager anticipation to see what the artist, Michelangelo Simoni, had been working on feverishly and in total secret for over two years. Standing at 14 feet, carved flawlessly out of pure white marble, 'David' was revealed towering over them – it was unlike anything they or anyone had ever seen before. What they beheld was an anatomically perfect, if giant, reinterpretation of the biblical character, in tense preparation to fight Goliath – a metaphor of Florence's defiance and strength. Today we see one of the many treasures of the Renaissance, Europe's cultural rebirth.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Florence was the unquestionable heart of the Renaissance. A city constantly steeped in fear, of invasion from foreign powers, as well as disastrous plagues, it was here that some of the foremost thinkers, artists and writers of the era would find patronage and inspiration for their work. Though throughout the Reformation the Italian cities remained deeply Catholic, this fear and constant reminder of life's frailty gave much of the art and literature in this era notable humanist traits.

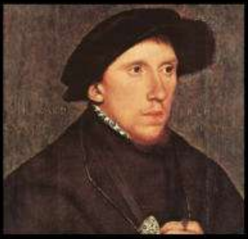
In a break from medieval traditions, artists began to depict scenes with unprecedented realism, utilising light and dark to cast their figures in new and more-dramatic tones. For the first time the Virgin Mary, or the Madonna with child, actually appeared lifelike, bringing out her humanity to the observer. Biblical figures, in addition to characters from antiquity, were being brought to life in a way never seen before, in terms of their form as much as the new and more vivid colours artists could bring to their brush.

With a population of around 60,000 at the outset of the 15th century, Florence was a small, but by no means feeble city state. Twelve artist guilds chiefly led the city, monitoring and regulating the flourishing cloth and textile trade that brought in vast amounts of wealth. The city was also sporadically headed by one of several ruling families. The most famous of these was Lorenzo de' Medici, who became the patron of some of Florence's most brilliant minds and artists, including Sandro Botticelli, the aforementioned Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. This method of working under patronage would come to typify lives of many Renaissance artisans, who quickly found fame and fortune plying their skills for rich patrons and even royalty all over Europe.

> "The ideas of the Renaissance were much slower to spread to England"

The ideas and ideals of the Renaissance were much slower to spread to England than elsewhere. While Botticelli was completing one

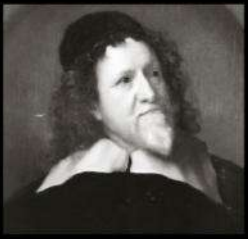
Key figures



HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

A friend of King Henry VIII, Howard is considered to be among the foremost instigators of English Renaissance court poetry and the English sonnet form. Sharing his verse among a select coterie of friends at court, his work reflects on life, death and the ideals of living 'the happy life'. Howard rose in the royal graces after his first cousin, Anne Boleyn, married the king in 1533. Though he eventually fell from the king's favour and was executed in 1547 just days before the king's own death, for many Howard embodies the Renaissance spirit of the warrior, the scholar and the poet.

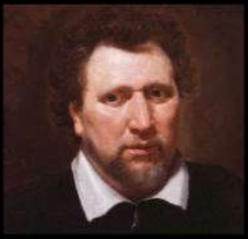
ABOVE: This portrait of Howard was produced by Hans Holbein The Younger, the king's royal painter



INIGO JONES

A highly skilled engineer and artist, Jones spent many of his formative years in Italy, where he absorbed much of the artistic styles brimming in Florence and elsewhere at the end of the 16th century. He gained fame and fortune first as a set and costume designer for King James I, where he worked on the court's extravagant court masques. Soon he was introducing the grandeur of Italian Renaissance architecture to England, working on renovations to St Paul's Cathedral, a new Banqueting House at Whitehall, and even the lavish Covent Garden estate in London, where he designed the capital's first square in the style of Italian piazzas.

ABOVE: Jones was chiefly responsible for bringing Renaissance styles to London into the 17th century



BEN JONSON

Jonson attended a Westminster elementary school at an early age, where he embarked on rhetorical and classical training, as well as lessons in Greek and Latin. A lack of funds forced him to return to his stepfather's trade as a bricklayer, but Jonson was driven to better himself and soon entered the world of the emerging Elizabethan theatres in Bankside. A friend and colleague of Shakespeare, Jonson became among the foremost literary critics and playwrights of his era. After gaining a royal pension shortly after the publication of his first folio he is even considered to be England's first ever poet laureate.

ABOVE: Jonson became not just a great poet and playwright, but also a fiery literary critic

of his most famous masterpieces in 1483 – 'Venus and Mars' – England was only just emerging from the latest clash of its bloody civil war. Botticelli's painting depicts a sleeping Mars, the classical god of war, and an alert Venus, the goddess of love. In England, at least, love and peace was restored after the coronation of Henry VII and his marriage to Elizabeth of York, uniting the two warring families and establishing the ruling Tudor dynasty.

In this new peace, patronage of the arts and the emerging mercantile class could thrive, rather than suffer under heavy investment in war. Though a printing press had been brought to England in around 1575, most of the population remained illiterate in the pre-Reformation state. However it would be Henry VIII's reign, beginning in 1509, that would truly see the Renaissance arrive in England. Henry was a huge admirer of art, architecture and a keen musician. Befitting a man of his status, he was well educated and was even an amateur alchemist, with his own personal collection of medicinal ingredients. In particular Henry's love of music, song and poetry spread throughout his court, and it was during his reign that the composer Thomas Tallis made his name.

Leading the Royal Choir, Tallis was a gifted singer and organist, appearing at Sunday Mass

Timeline

1320

The Divine Comedy is completed
Dante Alighieri's epic poem recounts the journey of an unidentified traveller who makes his way through the seven levels of Hell. It is among the earliest examples of written Italian and considered one of the instigators of Renaissance writing.
c.1320

Adoration of the Lamb
Commissioned in the early 15th century, to brothers Hubert and Jan Van Eyck, the Ghent Altarpiece is a 12-panelled oil painting depicting several biblical scenes, as well as the central figures of John the Baptist, Christ and the Virgin Mary.
c.1432

The theory of art explained
Leon Battista Alberti completes his first of three treatises on art, 'De Pictura' (On Painting), in which he presents new theories of art and its place in the world. His book is read widely in Italy and elsewhere and is considered as being among the first works on art theory.
c.1435

Defining moment

The Gutenberg Bible is printed c.1455

German entrepreneur Johann Gutenberg first began experimenting with prototype printing press in around 1452, from his workshop in Mainz. Shortly after, in around 1455, he produced the very first printed bible. Though Chinese scholars had been mass-producing text centuries earlier, the Gutenberg Bible marked the birth of the printing press in Europe, enabling the distribution of books and pamphlets all over the continent. This meant ideas on faith, politics and art would spread faster and further than ever before.

The Last Supper
Perhaps Leonardo Da Vinci's most famous work, 'The Last Supper' is completed after three years of planning. His depiction of Christ and disciples is painted on the walls of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie near Milan.
1498

St Peter's Basilica is begun
Designed by several of the Old Masters of Italian Architecture, including Michelangelo, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Raphael and Donato Bramante, the first stones of St Peter's Basilica in Rome are placed.
c.1506

on a rotary basis. Though much of his earlier life is undocumented, he found great success under Henry's patronage and continued to serve in the Chapel Royal into Edward VI's, Mary I's and even Elizabeth I's reigns. During this time he worked within and composed for his choir, appearing at all state occasions such as funerals, weddings and christenings. Among one of his most famous works is 'Gaude Gloriosa Dei Mater' (Rejoice Glorious Mother of God), composed for a six-part choir and written possibly near the end of Henry VIII's reign, though symbolically it would have been popular during Mary I's reign, given the subject matter of the Virgin Mary.

Of course, like any egoist king, Henry was also enthusiastic about his own image and his status of power. He commissioned Nonsuch Palace in 1538 to rival the grand royal buildings seen in France at the time, introducing some of the first Renaissance architecture styles to the country. To design Nonsuch's grand facades, Henry employed Nicholas Bellin of Modena, who had previously been working for the king's great rival, Francis I of France. Bellin was chiefly responsible for the ornate slate carvings covering the building, each depicting classical scenes from antiquity. Henry's other grand building projects included his palaces at Greenwich, Hampton Court and Whitehall, which he spent vast fortunes on renovating and re-shaping to his own taste and to signify his power.

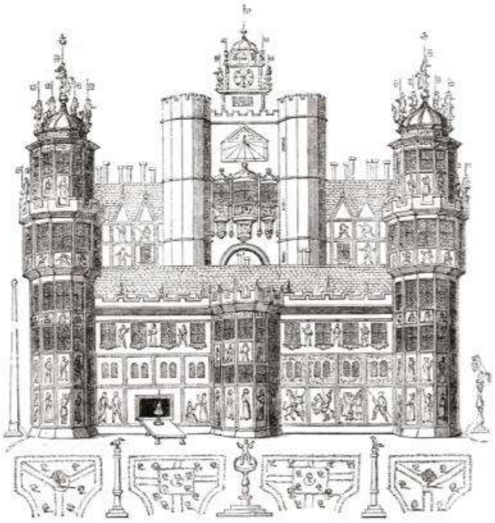
> "Like any egoist king, Henry was enthusiastic about his own image"

Inevitably all these grand buildings required fine artwork to fill them. Henry's taste in art varied, and he filled his halls with everything from historical battle scenes, to portraits of his ancestors, to iconic biblical imagery. In the 16th century, England had not yet produced a portrait artist of note to rival the brilliance of those emerging from the continent, so royal commissions for new masterpieces had to come from abroad. Antonio Toto and Pietro Torrigiani, both from Florence, each completed sculptures and furniture designs for the king, who was eager to surround himself in the latest splendour seen elsewhere in Europe.

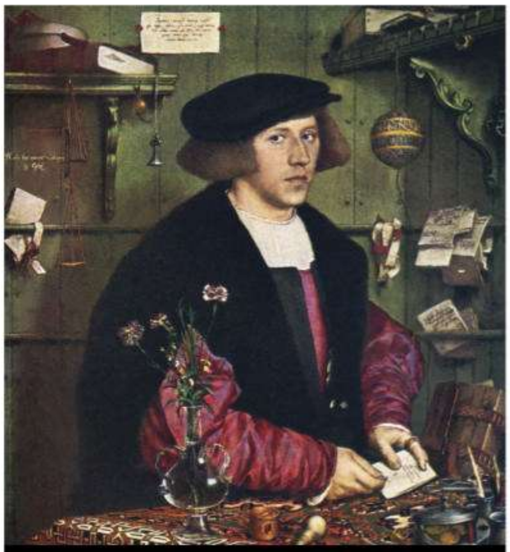
However the most successful artist under the king's patronage was Hans Holbein The Younger, a German student of the humanist and philosopher Erasmus. Introduced to court by Anne Boleyn, Holbein served as the official royal painter from around 1532 until his death in 1543. He produced among the most enduring images of the king, as well as his courtiers, in many ways sparking an increased desire for the nobility to invest in the latest artistic talents from the continent.

Undoubtedly the most celebrated aspects of the English Renaissance are its writers. Thomas More, the king's Lord Chancellor, was among the foremost scholars in England in his time, writing translations of ancient texts, as well as his own poetry and a lengthy work of fiction called *Utopia*. Though he is celebrated as a gifted social philosopher and one of the Renaissance's foremost humanist writers, More was entirely against the Protestant Reformation and Henry's abolition of the monasteries, and it was for this that he was eventually executed in 1535.

Rather than published works, it was within the tradition of court poetry, with manuscript verse being passed between small groups of close friends, that some of the greatest advances in English literature took place. Encouraged by the king, Henry's court was brimming with literary



Nonsuch palace was Henry VIII's great architectural project, where he displayed all his wealth and prestige, as well as brought continental styles to England



Among the most celebrated painters of Henry VIII's court, Hans Holbein was responsible for many of the famous portraits of the king and his courtiers

Defining moment

Michelangelo's 'David' is born c.1504

After three-and-a-half years' work, Michelangelo's 'David' is finally unveiled on the Piazza della Signoria, Florence. The completely nude depiction of David was not only intended as homage to classical Greek and Roman sculpture, but also a personification of Florence itself. By the 16th century the fragile republic was on the verge of collapse, and the confident depiction of the youthful, confident David embodied a future renewal of the city itself, as well as its underdog status against the Goliath of foreign powers. On creating 'David', Michelangelo challenged perceived artistic convention by stating that he was 'removing' extraneous matter, until all that was left was David – in a sense uncovering the essence of the art from within the marble itself.

The Prince circulates

Niccolo Machiavelli's most famous work, *The Prince*, is completed. Dedicated to the new ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici, the text is a philosophical analysis of how best to govern and even conquer principalities.

c. 1513

The Reformation begins

In Germany Martin Luther publishes his translation of the New Testament, making it available to be read outside of the church. This sparks the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe.

c.1522

Human anatomy explained

Belgian physician Andreas Vesalius publishes among the first studies of human anatomy; 'De Humani Corporis Fabrica' (On the Fabric of the Human Body). His work is the first of its kind as it was based on studying human dissections, and observing the internal functions of the body.

1543

Defining moment

Plutarch's Lives translated 1579

The Greek biographer Plutarch chronicled the lives of famous figures from antiquity, such as Caesar, Alexander the Great and Cleopatra. After its French translation was published in 1559, English scholar Thomas North first translated it into English in around 1579. This translation made Plutarch's work widely accessible, opening up the interpretation and adaptation of his stories into verse and onto the stage. There is evidence to suggest that North was at least acquainted with Shakespeare, who explicitly borrowed from Plutarch when writing some of his most famous plays, including 'Antony and Cleopatra'.

1599

The Globe is built

Using the timber from an older theatre in north London, Richard Burbage and his company of actors, with assistance from craftsmen, begin building The Globe Theatre in Southwark, south of the river.

1599

talent, such as Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard. These noblemen are credited with establishing the form of the English sonnet, which would be picked up and adapted by the likes of Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Jonson and others. The form follows a structure of three quatrains (groups of four lines) and a final rhyming couplet, usually completing a witty conceit or whimsical flourish.

Both men were constantly in and out of the king's favour, each being closely linked with Anne Boleyn; Howard was Boleyn's first cousin, while Wyatt was rumoured to have been her lover. As a result of his often-fluctuating fortunes, Howard's verse in particular reflects on life, death, and man's place in the world. Like much Renaissance literature on the continent, the sonnets of the Tudor court draw heavily from classical references, while including idealistic images of the natural world and man's natural state within it – rooted in the Renaissance humanist tradition. Similar to their counterparts in France and Italy, the poets of the Tudor court were also scholars, engrossed in the writers from antiquity such as Ovid and Homer.

If it can be said that Henry's reign saw the importing of the continent's Renaissance in art and architecture, then the Elizabethan era saw the rise of the great playwrights and poets England would soon come to celebrate. Like her father, Elizabeth was a gifted scholar, and had a passion for the arts. Her court was constantly filled with musicians and singers, while plays, or royal masques as they were called, also gained immense popularity.

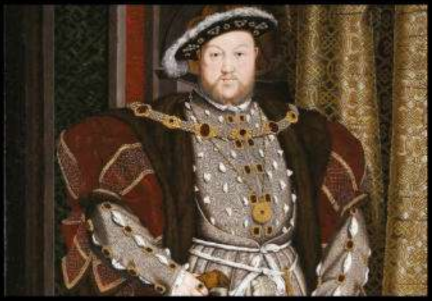
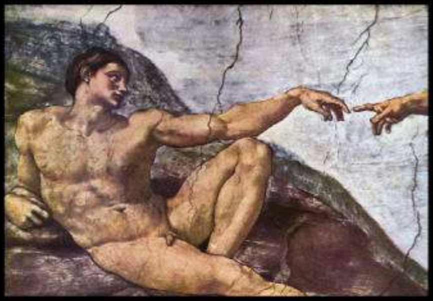
In 1576 the first play house in London was opened in Shoreditch, just north of the city wall, by James Burbage, an actor turned businessman. Twenty-two years later in 1598 his son Richard, along with his acting company, would dismantle this playhouse, and transport it to Bankside, in Southwark, where it would be reconstructed as the Globe Theatre. Under the patronage of Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, The Lord Chamberlain's Men playing company gave regular performances at The Globe and at Elizabeth's court.

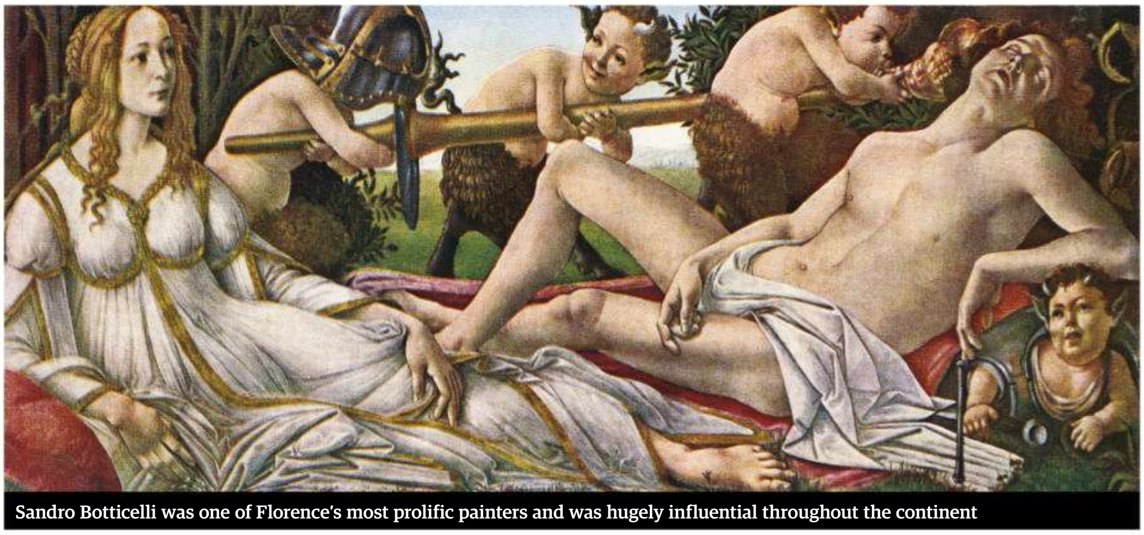
During the latter part of the 16th century, London's population soared to well over 200,000 (a huge number at the time). As people travelled to the capital to seek their fortunes, some of the greatest writers and artists became inevitably drawn to the booming theatre scene of Bankside. As well as Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel, Christopher Marlowe and others all found great success in the playhouses, where there even emerged a rivalry between playing companies and theatres.

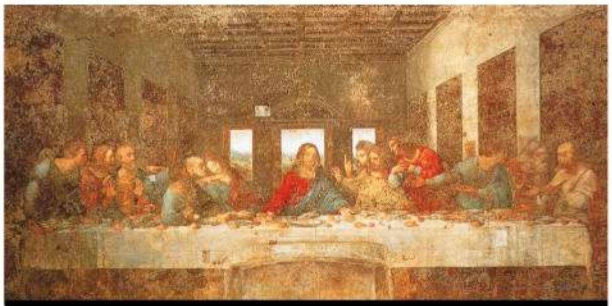
Just as England's cultural Renaissance came much later than its continental cousins', so too did it begin its exploration overseas long after its rivals. While Spain in particular had been reaping the benefits found in the New World for decades, it wasn't until Francis Drake's expedition to circumnavigate the globe began in 1577, that England began to reap the benefits of overseas exploration. New, more efficient ship designs made vessels stronger, faster, and easier to handle. This

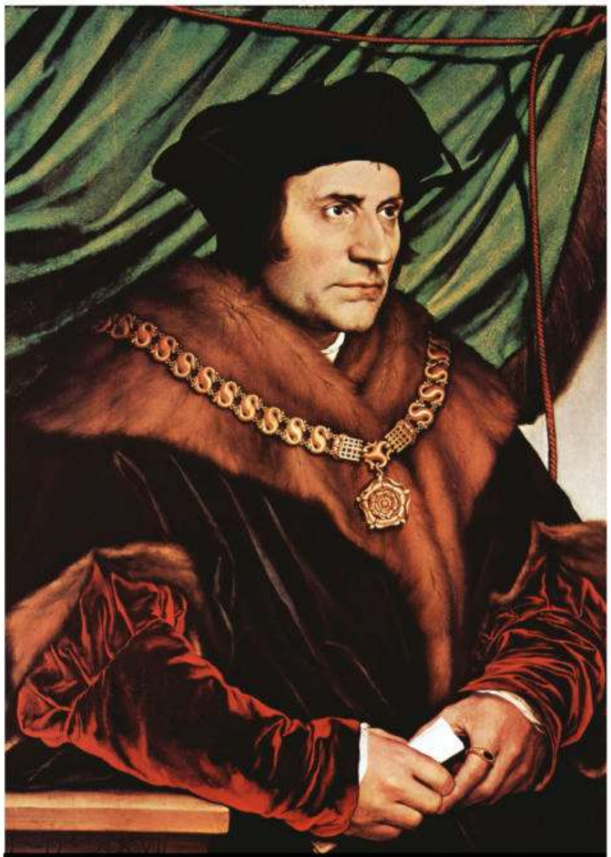
Europe's two Renaissances

How the movement differed in England and Mainland Europe

	England	**Mainland Europe**
		
♫ Music ♫	After the English Reformation, the place of music in church and in life changed dramatically. The leading composers of the Tudor were all connected inextricably with the church, or the royal court, or both. With the emergence of printed sheet music, the flow of compositions from the continent steadily grew more and more in popularity.	Groups of musicians on the continent could travel between territories much easier than their English counterparts, and would perform at royal courts and noble houses in several different countries. Franco-Flemish composers such as Josquin des Prez were incredibly popular in the early stages of the 16th century, and were still heavily influenced by Catholic mass.
Art	Many of the most famous painters to work in England were from the continent. For example Hans Holbein The Younger, a German artist, produced one the most famous portraits of Henry VIII in 1536. Henry also commissioned copies to be made of tapestries designed by Raphael, which had previously hung in the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican.	Among the most celebrated sculptures, portraits and religious paintings that we now consider to typify the Renaissance, the majority grew out of the traditions and practices of Florence's artist guilds. Soon the Florentine school – as it became known – produced painters and sculptors that were eagerly sought after by all of Europe's nobility and royalty.
Architecture	As the most popular and sought-after architectural styles in the era were drawn from Italian influences, as with portraiture, many royal building projects commissioned Florentine craftsmen. It wasn't until much later, with the likes of Inigo Jones, that English designs, albeit with heavily Italian influence, were popularised in London.	Drawing from the ridiculously fertile crop of artistic talent from Florence and elsewhere, the rich and the powerful all commissioned the finest visionaries for their building projects. Much Renaissance architecture was typified by huge commanding domes and soaring pillars, in imitation of classical Roman buildings.
Literature	English courtly poetry thrived in the 16th century, with manuscript verse passed between small groups of close friends, establishing new trends in written English. Soon after the introduction of the printing press, literacy levels throughout the country soared, and London's theatres housed some of the Renaissance's most brilliant writers.	Interest and interpretation of classical writers such as Homer and Ovid, sparked a new trend of translation and re-invention across the continent. The foremost change to literature on the continent came with the production of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book to be mass-produced in Europe.
⚕ Medicine ⚕	Alchemy, quack doctors, even wise women and witches still made up the majority of medical authorities in Tudor England, which was a similar situation to the continent. Physicians were available for only the very wealthiest in society, and commonly they were immigrants from abroad, such as Dr Rodrigo López, Elizabeth I's personal physician.	Among the greatest advances in medicine and the studies of human anatomy came from the mainland. Though da Vinci was dissecting and analysing human bodies much earlier, his work was not used to further the understanding of surgery or physiology. Andreas Vesalius was among the first doctors to use dissection as a means to understand the human body.


Sandro Botticelli was one of Florence's most prolific painters and was hugely influential throughout the continent


Painted directly on the wall of an abbey, Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' was unstable from the beginning and has been restored so many times many believe none of the original remains


Sir Thomas More was one of the foremost scholars in Henry VIII's court, and one of the most celebrated humanist writers in the era

made captains more daring and crews more willing to risk the vastness of the Pacific and beyond.

Spices, sugar and tobacco flooded into London, bringing with them the opportunity for even more profit, while gold stolen from Spanish treasure ships was returned from royally sanctioned privateer missions. New companies and businesses sprang up constantly, and new monopolies granted by Elizabeth created vast fortunes for the profit of London's merchants.

However, not every aspect of the Elizabethan Renaissance was fixed in the material world. The Queen's close advisor and personal astrologer Dr John Dee is one of the most celebrated and controversial scholars in the Elizabethan court. A brilliant mathematician, philosopher and alchemist, Dee struck a peculiar balance between science, magic and the divine in his work.

As new trade links with far-off Russia in the east and the Americas in the west were required, Dee's skills were called into service, using his knowledge of the night sky to help teach captains new methods of navigation. Dee was even consulted by Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced the Gregorian Calendar in 1582, though England would not adopt this until 1752.

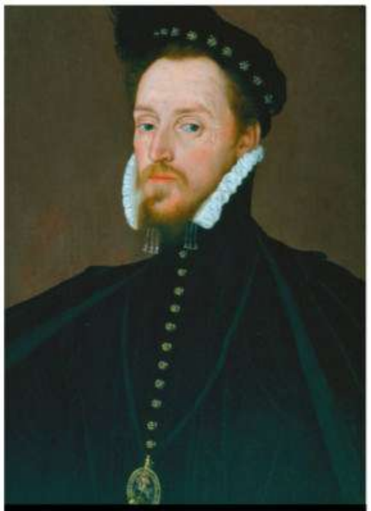
The death of Elizabeth in 1603 marked the end of the Tudor era in England, and in many ways the end of its unique Renaissance. By the beginning of James I's reign, Europe was already beginning to change once again. As the Reformation spread, and Protestant states began to grow in power, a Catholic counter-reformation would eventually bring about the Thirty Years' War. As fighting and unrest ravaged the continent, funding turned from the arts and literature, to arms and armies. In England, the arts would have their own unique struggle against increasingly powerful puritan elements in London, who in particular saw the play houses of Southwark as bawdy pits of vice. Soon a new civil war broke out, this time between parliament and the monarch, and the play houses were closed for decades. As it did some two hundred years previous, the country would be irreversibly changed by war, and remade in its aftermath – another rebirth was at hand.

Patronage in the Renaissance

During the Renaissance period, royalty, nobility and even the increasingly wealthy merchant class all desired to possess the finest art to display their status. They also commissioned portraits of themselves and their family, to become 'immortalised' on canvas, dressed in their best clothes and even surrounded by mythological or religious iconography. Poets and writers also often found rich patrons to fund their work, who in return would receive plays and poems dedicated to them. Some writers would even live with their patron, serving as tutors to the family's children.

For many skilled artisans the ultimate patronage was that of a monarch, from whom the greatest accolades and financing was to be sought. Shakespeare's theatre company was initially patronised by Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, and accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men. After James I's ascension to the throne in 1603, the king patronised the company himself, thereby dubbing it The King's Men. Through this sponsorship the company went on to flourish, and in turn meant that the company could run more performances.

In Florence much of the work by some of the most famous humanists, scholars, artists and poets, was accommodated by Lorenzo de Medici, the de facto ruler of the city. Da Vinci, Botticelli, Angelo Poliziano, Michelangelo, to name just a few, all benefited greatly from the political connections, influence and power Lorenzo could lend them. Skilled artists were also regularly employed by the church. Michelangelo's 'David', for instance, was an original commission by the Cathedral of Florence, while da Vinci's 'Last Supper' was painted for the Santa Maria delle Grazie, in the city of Milan.


As Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey became the patron of Shakespeare's company, which accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men

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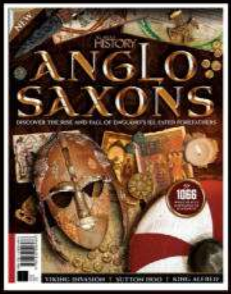
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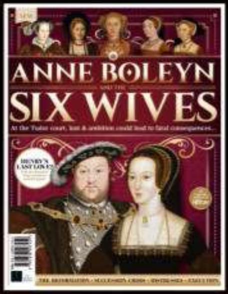
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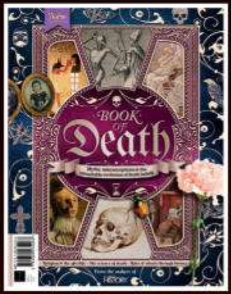
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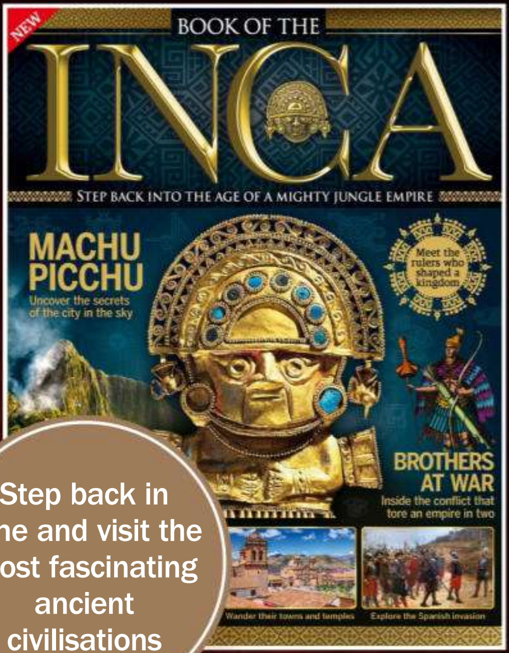
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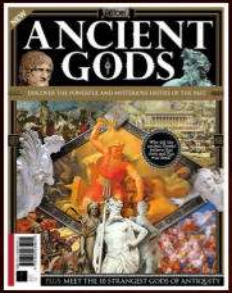
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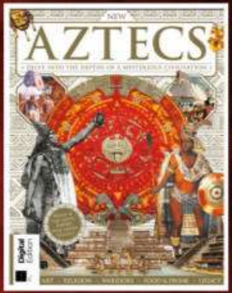

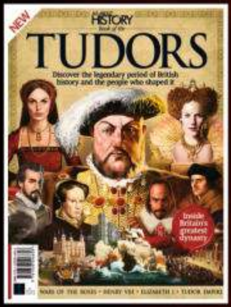

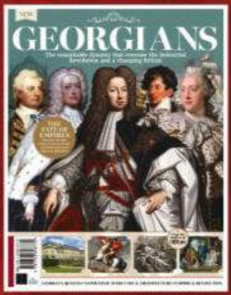
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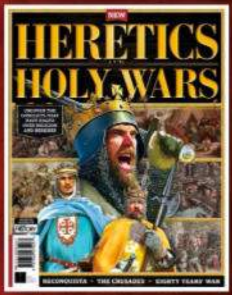
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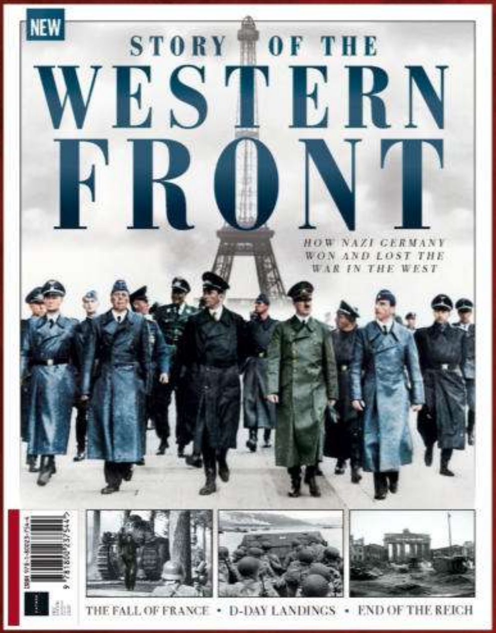
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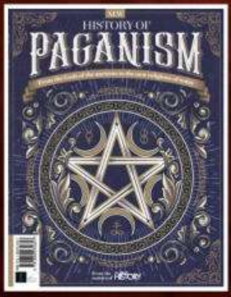
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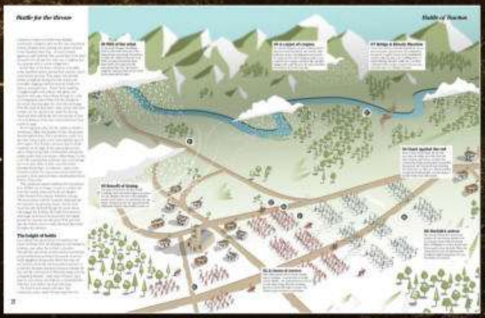

Battle for the throne

Battle of Bosworth

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